Commentary

Volume Sixty-four, Number Six, December 1977

EUROPE

The Specter of Finlandization
Walter Laqueur

The Collapse of the Social Democrats
Stephen Haseler

Vanity, Fame, Love, and Robert Frost
Donald Hall

Israel's Dilemma
Shlomo Avineri

Do the American People Know What They Want?
Paul H. Weaver

FICTION: The English Sickness
Pearl K. Bell

Her Son, the Teen-Aged Ascetic— A Story
Alice M. Green

An Exchange on Nuclear Energy
Samuel McCracken & Critics

Books in Review: Elliott Abrams/Joseph Shattan/Nelson W. Polsby/David Singer/Roger Starr

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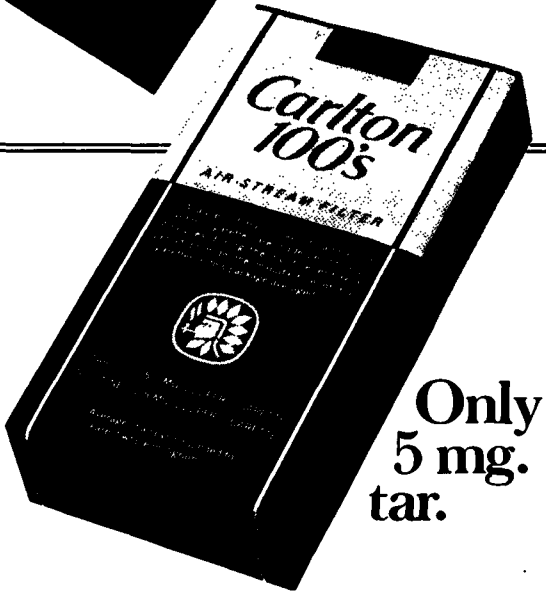

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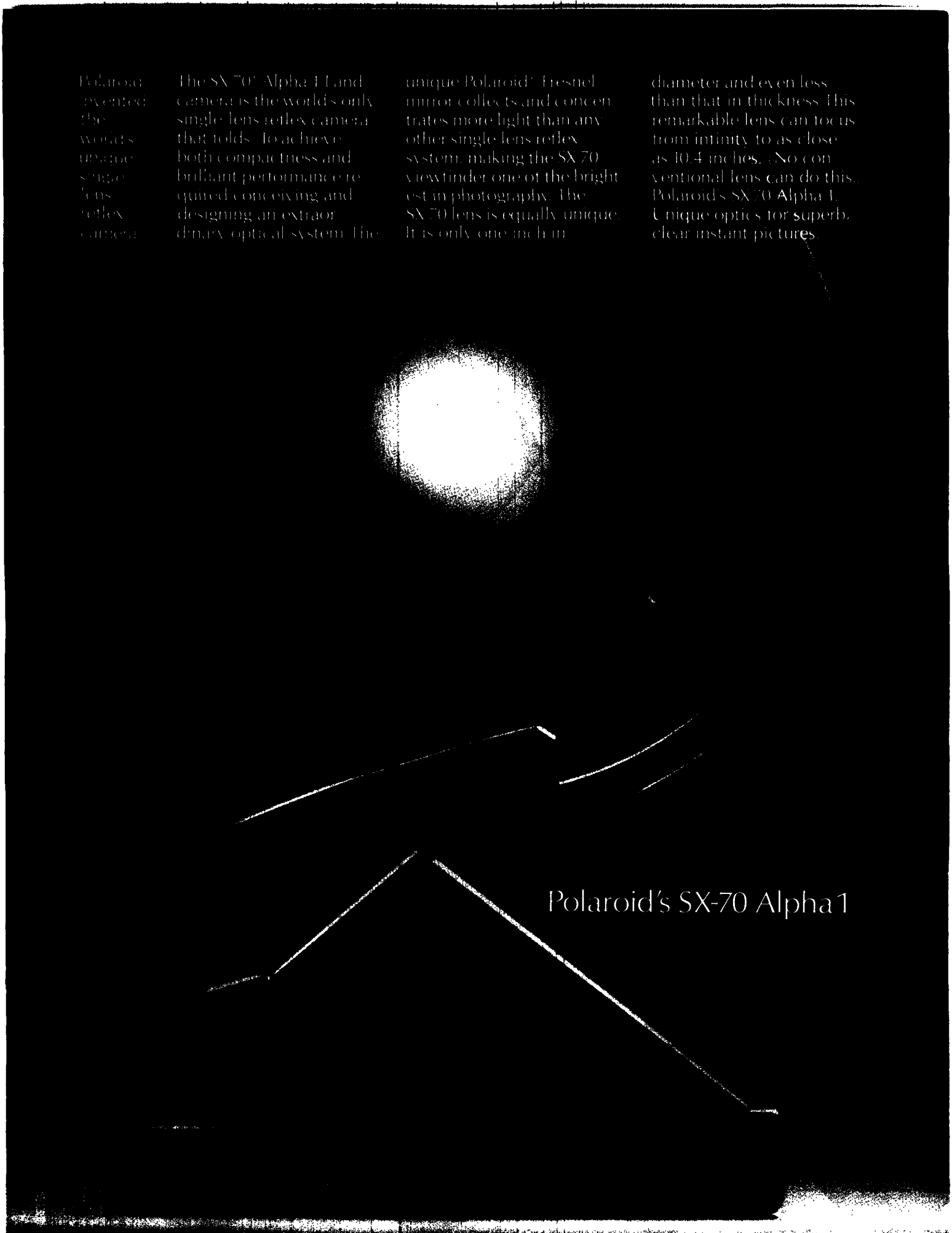

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Commentary

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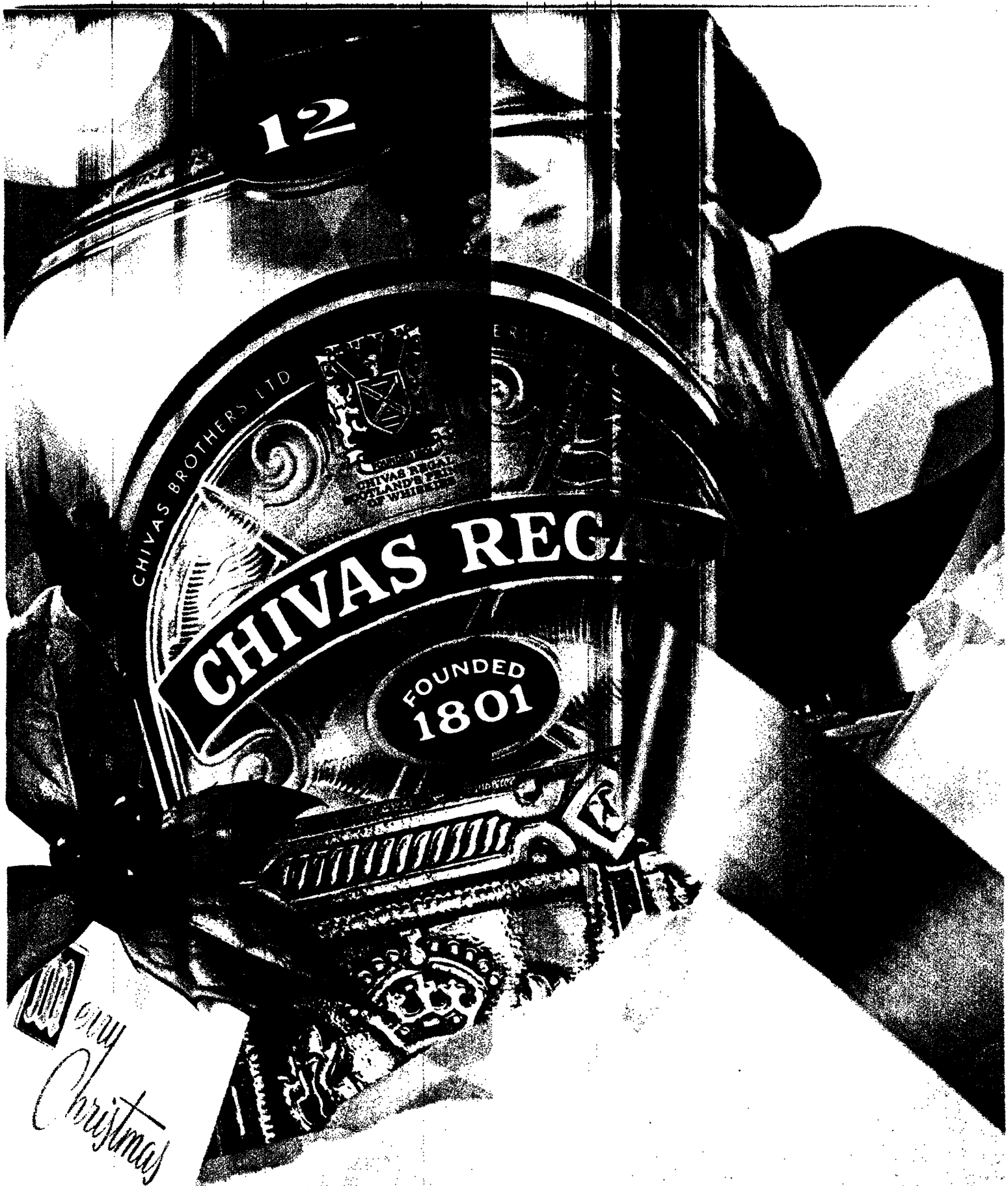

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Letters from Readers

Nuclear Energy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I should like to express my appreciation to COMMENTARY and Samuel McCracken for "The War Against the Atom" [September], . . . a welcome addition to the popular literature on this important topic. Misinformation pervades the nuclear controversy at all levels of discussion. . . . What bothers me most about this problem is the extent to which the mass media (TV documentaries in particular) have presented almost exclusively the truth according to Ralph Nader . . . and company. TV producers appear to have succumbed once again to the temptation to acquire a larger audience by spreading the story that thousands are going to be killed rather than presenting scientific explanations in excess of three sentences which indicate that this might not happen. A recent petition campaign by those opposed to nuclear power, in which thousands of dollars were spent, received 2,300 scientists' signatures and was given extensive press coverage. Meanwhile, a privately-circulated petition supporting nuclear power received 50,000 scientists' signatures but almost no press coverage. What explains these performances by those allegedly committed to the public's "right to know"?

EDMOND EDWARD
Albuquerque, New Mexico

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I can't tell you how refreshing it is to read an article like Samuel McCracken's, refuting the distortions presented by the anti-nuclear groups. . . .

MAX ZAR
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken's patient and knowledgeable plea for developing our nuclear power capabilities deserves the highest praise. When he gives short shrift to the chances of tapping other energy sources, however, he leaves himself open to rebuttals. In the September 16, 1977 issue of *Science*, two authorities on solar energy, A.F. Hildebrandt and L.L. Vant-Hull, convincingly argue in favor of mirror systems in 100-megawatt units for which the sun-drenched deserts of the Southwest are a first-site choice. Transmission of electrical energy to population centers 1,000 miles away is, of course, no problem. Since, according to the article, one 100-megawatt plant covers about 1.4 square miles, 1000 megawatts (Mr. McCracken's figure) can be produced by mirrors and towers covering 14 square miles and not 50 square miles, the figure cited by Mr. McCracken. It is clear, however, that even 50 square miles is a mere fraction of the land surface available in the U.S. for mirror systems, once they are backed up by the necessary industrial capacity for installing them.

LUDWIG SELIGSBERGER
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wish to commend Samuel McCracken for his excellent article. Those of us who are familiar with nuclear power have been distressed by the many one-sided, often sensational, anti-nuclear articles which have appeared in the press. Replies to these attacks are often deemed not newsworthy and are buried in the back pages or not published at all. I hope that Mr. McCracken's well-reasoned defense of nuclear power will be carefully read by many who adopted the anti-nuclear viewpoint on the basis of limited or biased information.

I must, however, disagree with Mr. McCracken on one point: the superiority of the Canadian heavy-water reactor [CANDU] to current U.S. reactors. Although the reactor core of a CANDU reactor consists of a great many relatively small high-pressure pipes, containing coolant, these pipes are gathered together by headers. The CANDU reactor coolant then flows in very large pipes to heat exchangers where steam is generated. The likelihood of one of these pipes rupturing is very, very low, but no lower than the likelihood of one of the coolant pipes of the U.S. design rupturing. A rupture of one of the large pipes in either design would have about the same consequences to the system. Emergency core-cooling systems may be expected to protect the public in both cases.

The CANDU system has been studied widely by manufaturers and utilities in the United States.

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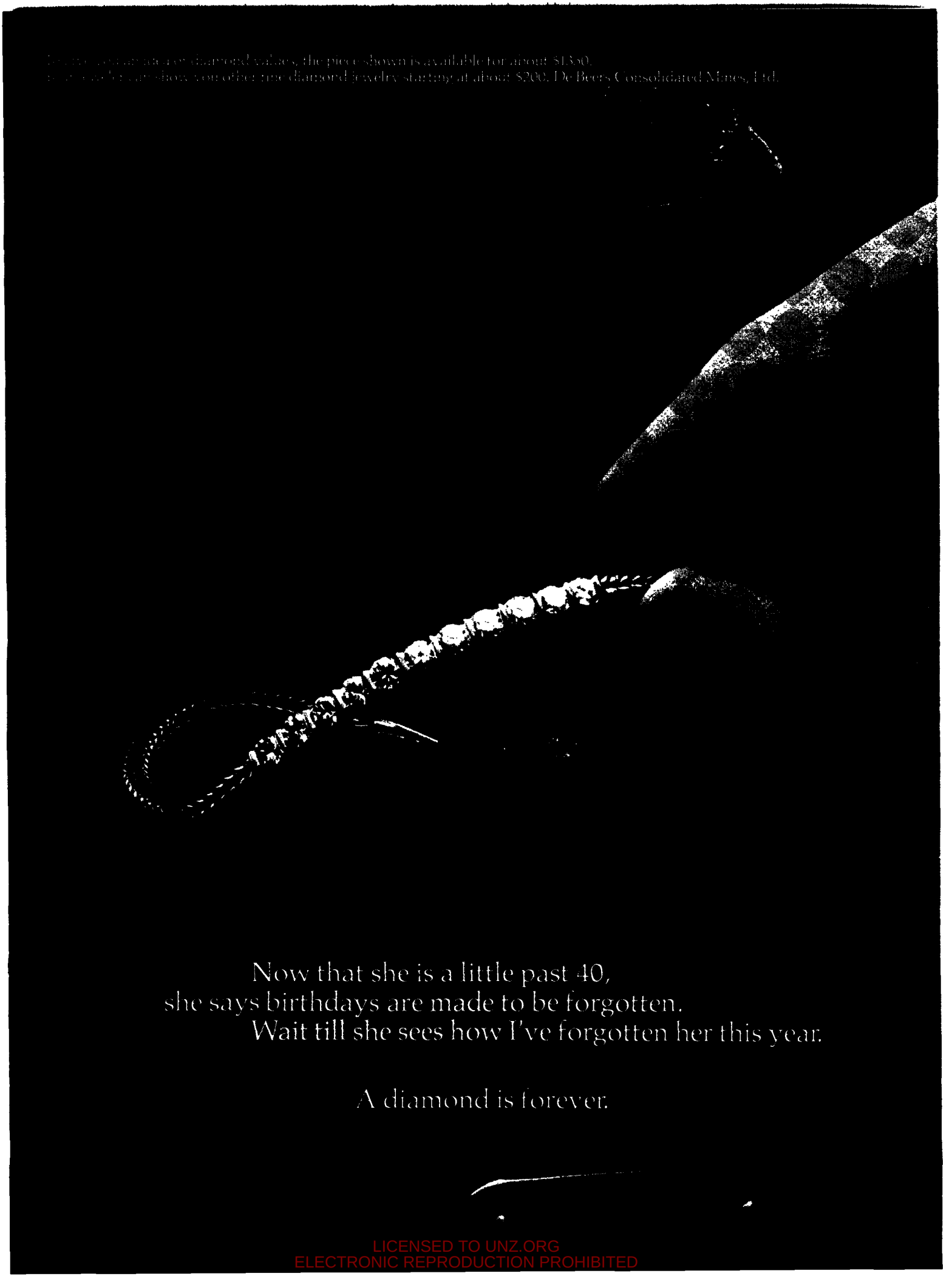
Now that she is a little past 40,
she says birthdays are made to be forgotten.
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All of these studies have concluded that, under U.S. conditions, a CANDU plant would have power costs considerably above those of current U.S. designs. There is no point in building a U.S. demonstration plant when utilities consider such a plant financially unattractive and when large operating plants in Canada are readily available for study.

JOEL WEISMAN
Department of Chemical and Nuclear Engineering
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The issues of nuclear energy—the extent of our current and future need for it, the problems of its safe expansion as a substitute for fossil fuels, the special questions associated with the widespread international dissemination of the technology and facilities for production of plutonium or highly enriched uranium-235, both capable of use as explosives—these are very complex issues, too serious to be treated in the flip and supercilious fashion adopted by Samuel McCracken. Certainly one does not need to be a nuclear physicist to understand and analyze these issues; but a minimum adherence to the facts would seem to be required of those who wish to influence public decision-making in this realm.

It is not the purpose of this letter to detail the numerous scientific errors in the article (radioactivity is *not* neutron emission; thorium is not a fissionable element; the first experimental nuclear power reactors were *not* breeders; there is no physical law that prohibits the production, in a reactor, of more fuel than is consumed; etc., etc.). Mr. McCracken is after all not a scientist, let alone a nuclear physicist. But he should surely be expected to check his journalistic sources. Thus, his reference to the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* as one of the "organizations . . . active in opposition [to nuclear power]" exhibits a woeful lack of familiarity with the sources he professes to have studied.

Any perusal of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* over the last few years would reveal at least as many articles in favor of nuclear power as in opposition—indeed, the entire spectrum of views on the future of nuclear power has, to the best of the ability of the editors, been covered in the most factual and dispassionate fashion of which the editors have been capable. Unfortunately, with the current polarization of views, such knee-jerk conservatism as Mr. McCracken's—where one is either on the side of the establishment or automatically suspect—seems to be in the ascendancy. It would be a tragic loss to American intellectual life if the traditional open-minded approach of the American intellectual and academic community should be preempted by the zealots now pretending to speak on our behalf.

BERNARD T. FELD
Editor-in-Chief, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*
Department of Physics, MIT
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . ."The War Against the Atom" by Samuel McCracken . . . is replete with statements that pose as scientific truth but are in fact half-truths and errors. I have attempted in this lengthy letter to point out many of these statements . . . [but] a proper criticism would require a letter much longer than the original article. . . .

I will discuss in detail one example, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and then point out, briefly, the very many errors and half-truths which appear in the article.

Environmentalists, arms-control people, and most Americans are concerned with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The danger of diverting plutonium, were it separated from spent fuel, is real, and the possibility of its use as a nuclear bomb is also real. This is a problem which responsible persons take seriously. What does Mr. McCracken have to say?

Mr. McCracken downplays the usefulness of reactor-grade plutonium as a bomb source, and blames environmentalists for spreading lies. He claims that building a bomb from reactor-grade plutonium is difficult because such plutonium "is heavily contaminated with Pu-240, which can cause a bomb to explode prematurely and fizzle." He goes on to add that it doesn't "matter whether plutonium *is* an ideal substance for terrorism as long as enough people *think* it is," and, for that, "prospective terrorists are getting a good deal of help from those who go about spreading lurid falsehoods . . . about the ease with which the plutonium in reactors can be made into bombs."

Mr. McCracken is wrong. Reactor-grade plutonium of simple design can make a bomb. The methods for making such a bomb and the quantities needed are documented in the unclassified literature. The distinction between military and civilian plutonium is essentially false. According to a study by California's Lawrence-Livermore Laboratory, even relatively simple designs using any grade of plutonium could produce "effective, highly powerful" weapons with an explosive yield equivalent to between 1,000 and 20,000 tons of TNT. . . . Richard A. Bowen, of the Division of International Security Affairs of the Energy Research and Development Administration [ERDA], has stated that the U.S. has indeed detonated a device fabricated of reactor-grade plutonium. . . . Responsible persons would say, therefore, that plutonium needs to be safeguarded both here and abroad, or, in the alternative, that it ought not to be separated from spent fuel. The latter is the position of the Sierra Club. If plutonium is safeguarded, the methods must be adequate and yet consistent with the ideals of a democratic society. It is untrue and malicious to state that establishing a repressive mechanism to track down terrorists who make false claims is a problem which is "largely the creature of the anti-nuclear movement."

Mr. McCracken believes that it would not be easy to smuggle plutonium out of a reprocessing plant because gram quantities are detectable. But there are better methods of smuggling plutonium out of a reprocessing plant than taking gram quantities in one's thermos. It is far easier to build up the noise level in the accounting system by removing kilogram quantities from the process lines, secreting them within the plant, and reinserting them in the process lines. After doing this several times, several kilograms could be taken at once. The material could leave the plant with the radioactive trash. A reading of recent Nuclear Regulatory Commission [NRC] documents on plutonium accountability and my knowledge of reprocessing plants make me believe that this scenario is credible.

I might add, in passing, that plutonium is not the only material which must be safeguarded, if separated. My favorite is neptunium-

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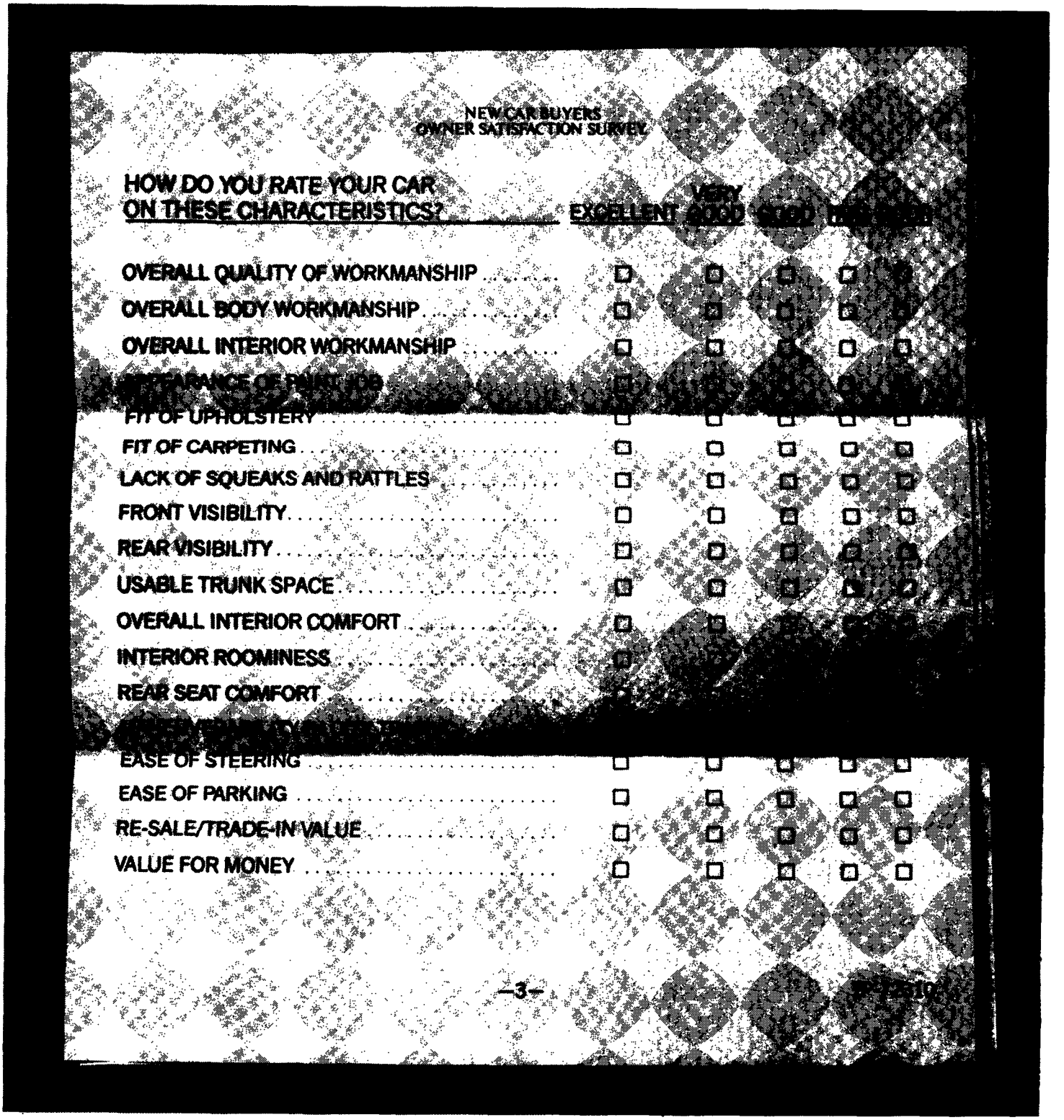

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[illegible]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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237 which has no stray neutrons, will not detonate prematurely, is not toxic, and is therefore easy to work with. . . . In addition, several americium and curium isotopes also have a rather small critical mass. Yet no mention of any of this is made in Mr. McCracken's article.

Next comes a series of statements by Mr. McCracken, followed by my own comments.

1. RADIATION DANGERS (ROUTINE OPERATION)

Mr. McCracken's view of radiation dangers during routine reactor operation is that the radiation emitted is small compared to background radiation, and that the evidence that small amounts of radiation produce genetic damage and cancer is inconclusive. It is my opinion that the only proper evaluation of health effects is in comparison with alternative methods of generating, or conserving, electricity. Contrary to Mr. McCracken's view, I believe that the health effects due to coal and nuclear generation during normal operation are comparable and that there is substantial proof that small amounts of radiation produce genetic damage and cancer.

McCracken: If one lives next to the property line of a nuclear reactor, the NRC permits an added [radiation] exposure of 5 mrem a year . . . — in practice, no reactor comes near the permitted maximum.

Comment: The boundary dose due to both liquid and gas discharges is 10 mrem a year. . . . This limit does not include direct radiation from solid radioactive waste. It one were to stand at the ME gate of Nine Mile Point Unit 1 in Oswego, New York, for a year, one would receive a dose of 1437 mrem (year 1976); I have not studied other reactors. . . .

If more than one reactor is sited in an area, then the allowable dose is multiplied. In Oswego, New York, there will be three reactors operating shortly and the allowable dose will be three times the 10 mrem a year limit.

Mr. McCracken does not discuss the occupational exposures at a reactor and at other components of the nuclear-fuel cycle. But they should be included since they contribute to the health effects due to reactor operation and contribute to the genetic effects in the general population. The industry-wide average for occupational exposure is 1000 "person"-rems due to a 1000-MWe reactor operating for a year. This is a much greater contributor to health effects than the 10 mrem per year boundary dose.

It is not only the releases from a reactor itself which must be considered, but from all support facilities as well, since they are integral to reactor operation. After all, if one includes the health effects due to mining coal, one must include the health effects due to mining uranium, etc. Effluents from uranium mill tailings, and reprocessing and high-level waste solidification, if recycling of plutonium is allowed, must also be included, and the health effects must be counted for the full radioactive life of the emitted radionuclides. . . .

McCracken: If one moves from Dallas to Denver, the additional annual exposure is nearly 100 mrem . . . [yet] Colorado's cancer incidence is *lower* than the national average.

Comment: As is well known, there are many factors responsible for cancer incidence, among these, air and water quality and food additives. The cancer incidence in Buffalo, New York, is twice the national average, due primarily to the effluents from the steel industry. Environmentalists, and the Sierra Club in particular, are concerned with all environmental pollutants, including radiation. Perhaps the cancer incidence in Colorado would be lower still but for the additional natural background radiation.

McCracken: It is not generally realized that this assumption [that minute amounts of radiation result in genetic damage to human beings] rests on laboratory results with animals that appear to be contradicted by actual experience with humans.

Comment: This statement by Mr. McCracken is wrong. I cite the following studies:

Mondan, *et al.* ("Radiation-Induced Head and Neck Tumors," *Lancet*, February 1975) examined the records of 11,000 migrants to Israel who had been administered X-rays in order to control tina capitis of the scalp (ringworm). They found a very high risk of thyroid carcinoma . . . and the mean dose was only 6.5 rad.

Alice Stewart, *et al.* ("Radiation Dose Effects in Relation to Obstetric X-rays and Childhood Cancers," *Lancet*, June 6, 1970) studied many thousands of children who received *in utero* doses of 0.2 to 0.8 rad and found mortality from leukemia and other forms of cancer to be 50 per cent higher on the average among these exposed children than among the unexposed controls.

Irwin Bross (in several papers discussed in the "Proceedings of the Congressional Conference on Low Level Radiation," Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., May 4, 1976) has shown that there are groups in the population with a very high susceptibility to radiation damage. Children with diseases such as asthma, hives, eczema, allergy, pneumonia, dysentery, or rheumatic fever have a 5000 per-cent greater risk of leukemia as a result of exposure to X-rays than do children not so exposed.

Mancuso, Stewart, and Kneale in a study of 35,000 workers at the Hanford storage facility in Washington over a twenty-nine year period showed a statistically significant increase in four types of cancers (myeloid neoplasm, breast cancer, pancreatic tumors, and lung cancer). The results are about sixty times greater than those predicted by the National Academy of Sciences in the . . . BEIR report. . . .

McCracken: Nuclear reactors, routinely operated, are among the most negligible emitters of radiation, and thus among the most negligible causes of cancer from radiation.

Comment: Most environmentalists would agree that "reactors, routinely operated, are among the most negligible emitters of radiation." However, occupational exposures and other fuel-cycle emitters must be included in the calculatons, and the associated health effects of these are not negligible. Let me consider just one of these factors, uranium mill tailings. Reactors need uranium ore; the residue is left in a uranium mill-tailings pile. These tailings release radon gas and will do so for very long periods of time. The NRC evaluates the healths effects due to the tailings pile for a period of forty years; the number of health effects, in this case lung cancers, is 0.144 for each year's operation of a 1000-MWe reactor. This is not too serious. But what is the scientific justification for assuming that no health effects occur after forty years? If, instead, one considers the health effects over the full radioactive life of the mill-tailings pile, assuming a constant population, one obtains the

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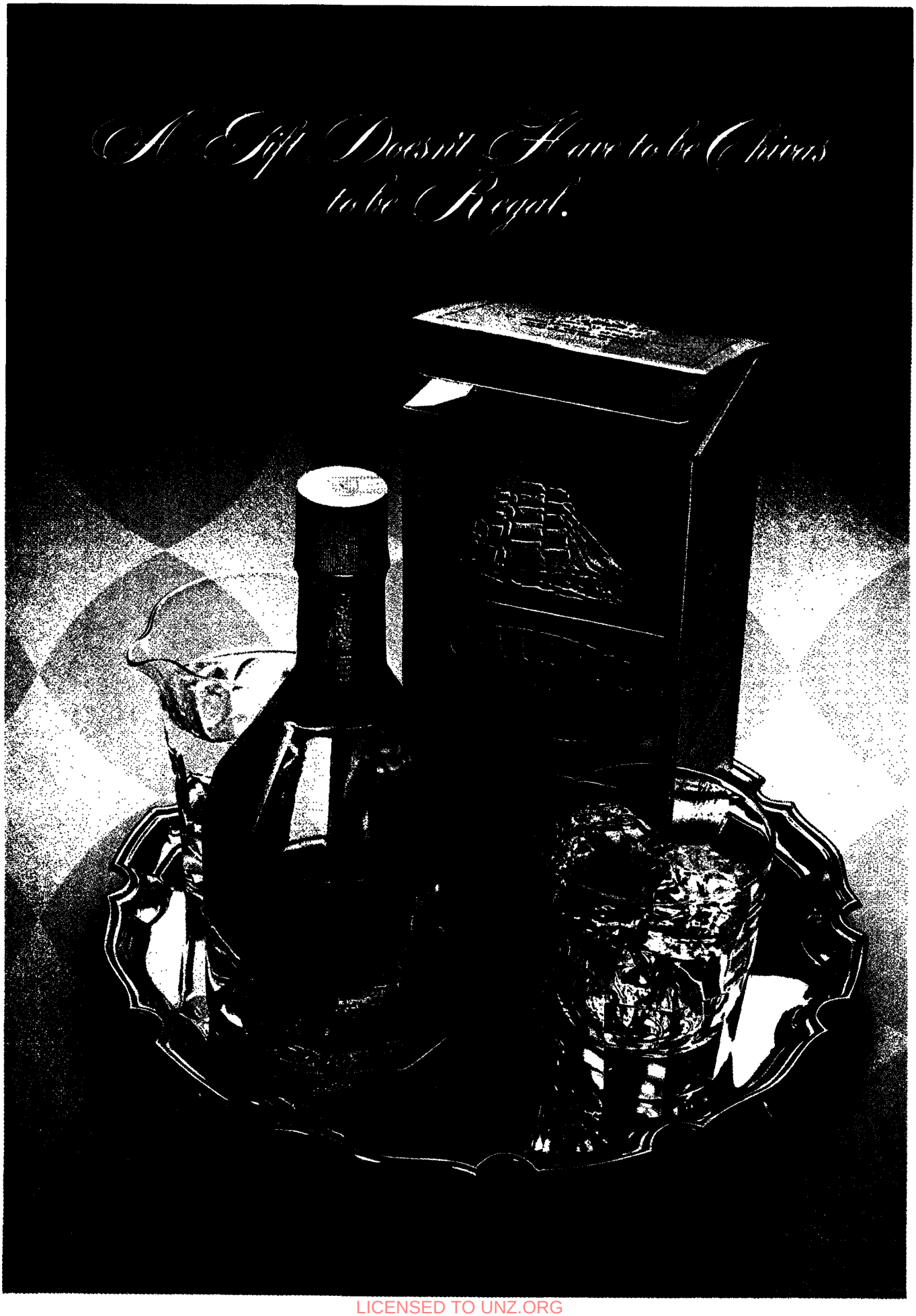

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number 396 health effects. . . . It is possible to reduce these mill-tailings health effects at a very minimal cost, but this is not the present practice of the industry.

McCracken: This . . . is the cost per year of *one* large coal-fired plant: between 31 and 111 lives a year. These deaths . . . are of actual people who die every year in order that coal-fired plants may be operated. In contrast, when we calculate all the deaths caused by a 1000-MWe light-water reactor—including all those killed by the fuel cycle, by the operation of the reactor, and by waste disposal—we arrive at a total of one-half a death a year. . . . The hypothetical deaths of nuclear energy are still no more than that. But the actual deaths caused by other technologies are countable and many. . . . Far from being our most dangerous source of energy, nuclear energy is our safest.

Comment: The calculation of one-half a death a year from nuclear plants is based on erroneous assumptions and is not a prudent estimate for health-planning purposes. The NRC unjustifiably evaluates health effects over a forty-year period, though the radiation produced will be present in the environment for very long periods. . . .

In addition, nuclear cancers don't wear flags—that is, it is difficult to identify those cancers specifically caused by nuclear energy, except for cancers which occur in uranium miners, a unique type of cancer. But to call nuclear-caused cancers, which contribute to the general cancer rate, "hypothetical," is irresponsible; these deaths are as real as, and as comparable in magnitude to, those caused by coal. . . . The deaths caused by reprocessing and high-level waste solidification *are* hypothetical because these facilities are hypothetical; there are none operable at present. . . .

McCracken: A typical coal-fired plant has a level of radioactive emission *greater* than that allowed for a nuclear plant. . . . If the NRC had responsibility for regulating our coal-fired plants, they would have to be shut down.

Comment: Coal does contain uranium. The average uranium concentration is one part per million. In the operation of a 1000-MWe coal plant for one year, about 3 million tons of coal are burned containing 3 tons of uranium. This is to be contrasted with 162 tons of uranium mined to generate electricity from a 1000-MWe nuclear reactor for one year. Thus, the health effects are about fifty times greater for nuclear plants. . . .

McCracken: The solid wastes carted away to the dump from coal-fired plants total tens of millions of tons a year. . . . These contain not only such non-radioactive poisons as mercury, selenium, vanadium, and benzopyrene, but radioactive materials such as uranium and thorium in amounts that would be impermissible for emission from a nuclear plant.

Comment: It is not well understood that the wastes from the nuclear industry are comparable in volume to those produced by coal. The fly ash resulting from burning coal is about 3×10^5 tons due to operation of a 1000-MWe coal-fired plant for one year. The mass of the mill-tailings pile due to one year's operation of a nuclear reactor is 10^5 tons per year; there are additional waste sources in the nuclear fuel cycle. Therefore, the waste volumes are comparable. As indicated, the uranium mill tailings contain much more radioactivity than that contained in a fly-ash pile. If one used a large part of the foreseeable resources of uranium, 2 million tons, and continued the present disposal philosophy, the expected number of lung cancers would be 45 per year due to mill tailings, and this death rate would continue for tens of thousands of years. . . .

2. Economics

Solar vs. Nuclear:

McCracken: Solar power is less promising as a means of central generation. . . . [The use of mirror systems that boil water to spin conventional turbogenerators is] at present too expensive to contemplate. Additionally, the photo-voltaic system requires very large land areas. With luck, a 1000-megawatt plant would occupy 50 square miles.

Comment: Solar power is most promising as a decentralized energy source for heating and cooling homes. Of course not much additional land area is required since houses need roofs anyway. But what about generating electricity in central locations? The plant which is "too expensive to contemplate" is being built in Southern California as a joint project with ERDA and a local utility.

It has been the frequent complaint of nuclear zealots that central-station solar generation would require enormous land areas. If one compares the land area requirements to generate electricity in the next twenty-five years, one finds that solar requires about twice as much land area as nuclear; this figure was developed by the NRC staff. . . .However, the land figures for nuclear power do not take into account the fact that land occupied by mill tailings will be occupied essentially forever, nor do the figures take into account the fact that "solar" land can be used for the next twenty-five years with no increase, whereas more and more land would be required for nuclear generation. . . .

Coal vs. Nuclear: . . . From my perspective, the economics are not very clear because of the large uncertainties in both fuel cycles. Utilities at the present time are building both coal and nuclear facilities. Some utilities claim that coal is cheaper, . . . some that nuclear is cheaper. What is true is that the closer the coal plant is to the coal fields, the more the scale tilts toward coal. However, future uncertainties appear to override these cost differences.

Contrary to Mr. McCracken's remarks, environmentalists have in a very minor way increased the construction time for nuclear reactors and therefore the costs. This has been well researched by Irwin Bupp of Harvard University (*Technology Review*).

The rise in electric rates that our senior citizens, those on fixed income, and poor persons must pay is a national disgrace . . . . It is my belief, and economists may disagree with me, that the electric-rate structure does not take into account properly the fact that this sector of the population conserves electricity and is not responsible for the addition of new facilities, which is the reason for the rising rates in the first place; they don't own appliances with which to "burn" electricity. . . .If long-run, incremental-cost pricing were instituted, the "fat cats" who increased consumption would pay more for each unit added and the rate structure would be inverted. This would force large users to conserve as well. To blame environmentalists, who are in support of conservation, for the plight of the poor is a bad joke.

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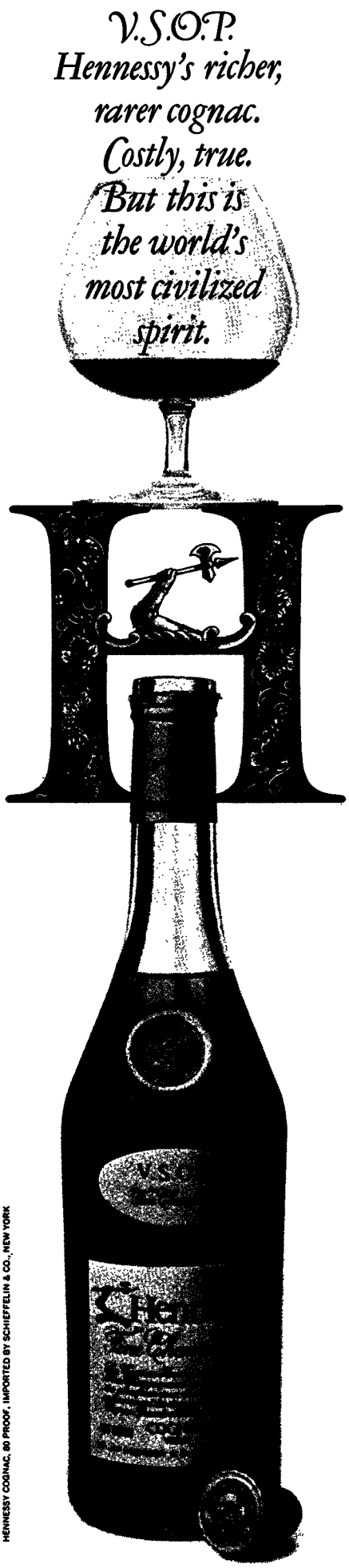

3. Radioactive Waste Disposal

McCracken: The technology for disposal, which has been demonstrated in a pilot project at Hanford, and actually used in Europe, involves first "calcining" the waste to a sand-like substance of greatly reduced bulk, and then using this "sand" as a component to make glass.

Comment: Radioactive wastes from the military program have been generated at Hanford for over thirty years now and there is still no viable program for removing these materials from the living environment. These materials must be continually watched. Since over 10 per cent of the tanks have leaked, ERDA has embarked on a program of drying the material to a salt cake within the tanks while removing the short-term high-heat radionuclides. While this action has "solved" the problem in the short term, what will happen to the remaining toxic material within the tank? The material will remain toxic for very long periods of time. Will the material be placed in a salt mine? How will this be done? ERDA has said that the material will be moved to a Federal Repository salt mine near Carlsbad, New Mexico, at a cost of about $60 billion. What about the commercial high-level wastes which sit in a tank at West Valley, New York? That material is much more toxic than the Hanford wastes, and the tank has a useful life of forty years. The company, a subsidiary of Getty Oil, has asked the state of New York to take over the whole problem. The estimated cost for disposal, by methods yet to be developed, is $0.5 billion.

So much for the bad news. Now for the bad news. The calcination method has been demonstrated in a pilot project at Idaho (not Hanford, as Mr. McCracken states). The fuel was low burn-up (much lower in radioactivity than commercial fuel), the amounts were not large, the detailed radioactive releases to the environment have not been published. If this is the prize project of the industry, why is it being kept "under wraps?"....

Since radioactive wastes have been generated for over thirty years, another question might be, why haven't these facilities been constructed already?....

McCracken: If there were an immediate need for such storage [in a Federal Repository], it would no doubt have already been implemented. But the fact is that there are not now enough wastes in inventory to make such a process economical, and there will not be for some years.

Comment: There is a very pressing need for a Federal Repository to accept spent-fuel elements from nuclear reactors; several reactors may have to close down in the next few years because of this nuclear constipation problem. Besides, there are many, many tons of military high-level wastes at Hanford, Savannah River, and Idaho. There is a considerable amount of calcine material at Idaho. A lot of research and development can be done. Exactly what amounts of radioactive waste would make the process "economic"? It appears to be a poor excuse for the past thirty years of inaction.

After discussing this "fact-is-stranger-than-fiction" article at some length, I remain perplexed as to why it was published. It is not an objective analysis of the industry. It is nothing more than a pro-nuclear advertisement.

Marvin Resnikoff
Chair, Nuclear Subcommittee of the Energy Policy Committee
Sierra Club
Buffalo, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Samuel McCracken's piece is a puzzle, full of half-truths and distortions. As one of those whom he labels a "scientific illiterate," I will not comment on the technical inaccuracies of the article, leaving that task to knowledgeable, accomplished anti-nuclear scientists who will surely rise to the occasion.

What disturbs me, however, is Mr. McCracken's application of such labels to others when his own credentials seem to lack the scientific literacy he claims is a prerequisite to an intelligent discussion of nuclear power. Can a man who, according to his brief biography, has published articles on an encyclopedia scandal, on classroom quackery, and on something called the population controllers actually consider himself a scientific literate in comparison with the recognized scientists who are speaking out cogently for their beliefs on the nuclear issue?

While I make no claims to scientific literacy, I can claim some expertise at editorial literacy—

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enough to recognize that an article whose every mention of nuclear opponents must be accompanied by such phrases as "anti-nuclear dogma . . . suffused with ignorance, sensationalism, and downright dishonesty. . ." is relying less on rational and cool argument than on refutation by emphatic denial.

Mr. McCracken's swipes at those he disagrees with do nothing to bring forward a balanced view of the controversy. It would have been a better service to your readers if COMMENTARY had refrained from printing an article that adds more "routine yelps of hysteria"—to use Mr. McCracken's words—to an already muddled issue.

FRANCES GENDLIN
Editor, *Sierra*
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

COMMENTARY has performed a useful service in presenting points of view on controversial matters, and no one can fault it for publishing an article favorable to nuclear energy. However, "The War Against the Atom," is far from dispassionate. . . .

The validity of the article is demolished by its tone. With trigger words the author dismisses opinions that differ from his, and with *ad hominem* arguments disparages opponents. His case is not supported by such phrases as "extremely ignorant," "suffused with ignorance," "sensationalism," "downright dishonesty," "melodramatic piffle," "a classic Big Lie," "Ralph Nader's secular sanctity," "an advocate whose concern is not with truth but with propaganda," "anti-nuclear advocates should wish to perpetuate the lie," "statistical demagoguery," "perverse use of the facts," "spurious ground," "constant misstatements to the contrary by people who should know better," "false nostrums," etc.

Mr. McCracken would have us believe that all opposition is conducted by a "lobby" of emotional people and is without scientific formulation. Yet among the opponents are nuclear physicists, geneticists, and medical experts such as, for example, Nobel Laureates Harold Urey (one of the developers of atomic fission), George Wald, James D. Watson, Linus Pauling, and Hannes Olof Alfven. In addition, there are Dr. John W. Gofman and Arthur R. Tamplin (who worked for the Atomic Energy Commission for many years), David R. Inglis, Paul R. Ehrlich, and John T. Edsall. Dr. Edward Teller, father of the hydrogen bomb, stated that he considered a nuclear bomb "a relatively safe instrument" compared with a nuclear power plant. Dr. George L. Weil, a former colleague of Enrico Fermi, involved in the Manhattan Project, pointed out the dangers of nuclear plants and their waste of energy.

Each of these men has opposed nuclear plants because of their inherent danger, because of their effect on the environment, the risk to which they put human health and life, or because of the unsolved potential horrors from nuclear wastes. And let us not forget the engineers of the General Electric Company who resigned because they did not feel nuclear power plants could be made safe, and the man in charge of security who did not believe nuclear materials were adequately protected.

Mr. McCracken assures us that the problem of long-term storage of nuclear wastes, the plutonium in which has a half-life of some 250,000 years, can easily be solved. Storage in salt mines in Kansas was hailed as a solution a few years ago until it was discovered that water seepage from a nearby salt mine might spread the pollution from the wastes. This is just one example out of many of human fallibility in such a critical area and of the dangerous slighting of environmental factors. . . .

Mr. McCracken ignores the 1960 statement of the National Academy of Sciences pointing out the improper disposal of nuclear wastes and the "job of finding safe, permanent disposal sites." There has been little progress made in this area since that statement. Ignored is the statement by the Government Accounting Office to the effect that after decades of work neither the AEC nor the Energy Research and Development Agency has demonstrated acceptable long- or short-term means of storage and/or disposal of high-level wastes. . . .

Mr. McCracken makes the argument that after all we are subject to radiation from outer space and uranium in the earth. In effect he is saying: so what's a little more from nuclear plants? The point is that flora and fauna, including the human race, have adapted to these forms of radiation implicit in the environment in the course of evolution. But when you add man-made radiation you are adding something to which animals and vegetation have not had to adapt in their evolution. It is a bit like saying that because you can drive safely with one drink you can drive safely with three.

Mr. McCracken fails to consider that over the years the AEC, step by step, reduced the amount of radioactivity to which a human could be safely subject. Like Mr. McCracken, the AEC pooh-poohed independent scientific criticism; nevertheless, it had to change its standards.

One of the great dangers which Mr. McCracken pooh-poohs is that plutonium might be used by terrorists. From the literature available it has been shown that a college student can make a bomb and that only a few pounds of plutonium are necessary for such a bomb. Granted it might not be the most efficient bomb. Nevertheless, we know the extremes to which terrorists have gone to blackmail nations in the last few years. They can make bombs. They can blackmail nations with such bombs. Contrary to Mr. McCracken's optimism, there has been a deficit found in the inventories of nuclear materials in the hands of United States agencies and at least one of its contractors.

According to Mr. McCracken, "The most common assertion one hears . . . is the flat statement that we do not know how to dispose of high-level wastes which must be isolated from contact with the biosphere for many thousands of years." He flatly states, in spite of all the evidence, that "this challenge has already been met," and that its endless repetition is the equivalent of "a classic Big Lie." In addition to some of the scientists already referred to, the "big liars" include the National Council of Churches. He dismisses their opposition as an "intrusion of theology into science, which awoke echoes of Galileo's encounter with the Inquisition." Now, really! What the National Council of Churches was pointing out was that to protect humanity (and the entire eco-system in which humanity lives) for thousands of years would, in the long run, lead to a police state, the end of democracy, and the end of freedom of thought, just the reverse of the Galileo situation.

Enough has been said now to demonstrate the biases, anti-social tone, and irrelevance of Mr. Mc-

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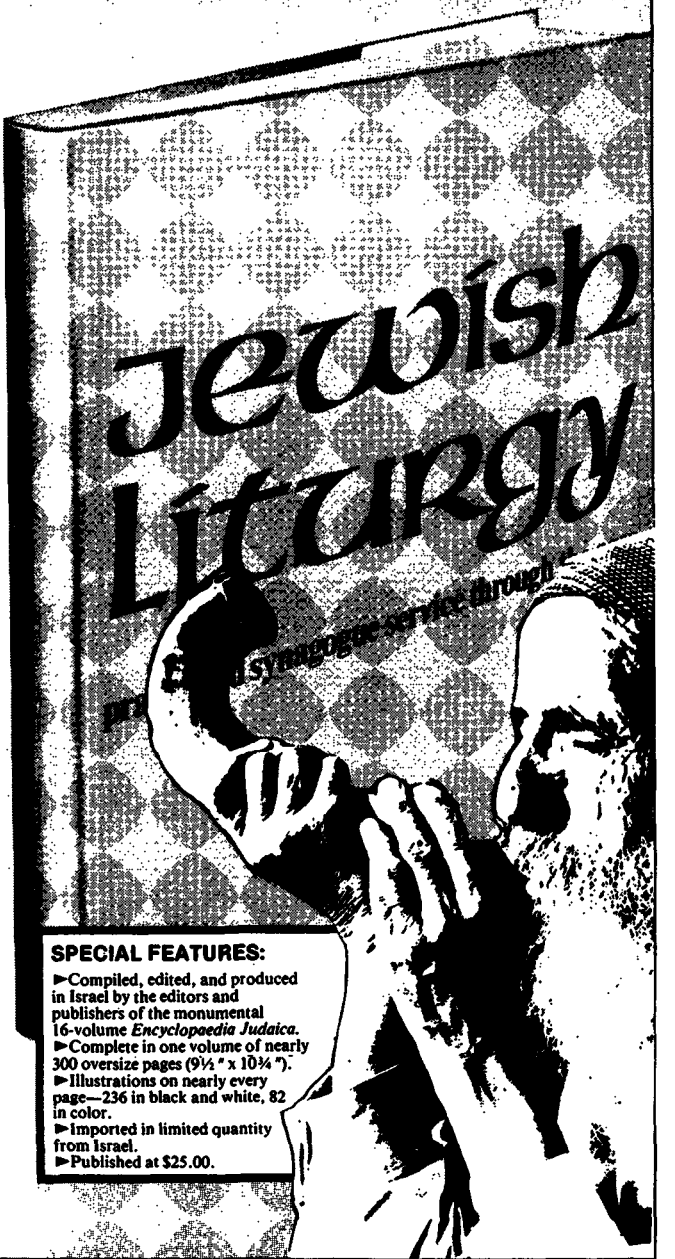

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Cracken's article. There are a number of other errors and omissions in the piece, but space is too limited to consider them. Another fifteen-page article would be necessary.

JAMES MARSHALL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In a footnote on p. 36, Samuel McCracken identifies us as "General Electric engineers who resigned over the issue of nuclear safety" and cautions his readers to be skeptical of us. He states, moreover, that "members of a para-religious organization" had guaranteed us an income "should our anti-nuclear activities prove insufficiently lucrative." That statement is false. None of us was guaranteed an income by anyone, and none of us has continued to be a participant in the General Electric Profit Sharing Plan, though we do continue to own a small number of shares of GE stock. We request a retraction.

It is indeed regrettable to us that, after having gone through the obvious effort of researching a field in which he apparently has had no experience and little technical understanding, Mr. McCracken missed the opportunity to do something really constructive about the widening gap in the nuclear debate. . . . Instead, his article is belittling and demeaning to many reputable people in this country and amounts to more rocks being thrown to the benefit of no one.

RICHARD B. HUBBARD
DALE G. BRIDENBAUGH
GREGORY C. MINOR
MHB Technical Associates
Palo Alto, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Samuel McCracken's article on nuclear safety is a well-prepared compendium of the nuclear industry's arguments in defense of itself, but as such it suffers from the defect of ignoring criticisms to which the industry has been unable to develop a reponse.

Nowhere in the article is there mention of the very serious charge, which has been repeatedly made and documented by most of the critics whom Mr. McCracken attacks, that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (formerly the Atomic Energy Commission) is under the thumb of the nuclear industry and has allowed plants to be designed and operated in an unsafe manner.

Mr. McCracken's failure to address this charge is illustrated by his casual reference to the most serious and revealing nuclear accident of recent years. He dismisses the accident with the single sentence: "It is often said that . . . in 1975 a fire in the Browns Ferry plant in Alabama came very close to causing a meltdown. . . . " I suppose he uses the phrase "It is often said . . ." to imply that there is doubt about the statement's validity. As one who has investigated and written about the Browns Ferry fire in detail, I can assure him that the the plant did indeed come close to a meltdown. However, a far more important fact about the fire is that it revealed gross incompetence and negligence on the NRC's part in enforcing safety standards not only at Browns Ferry but throughout the nuclear industry. Here are some of the facts that the fire revealed:

1. *Instead of inspecting the operation of nuclear plants, the NRC allows the licensees to do their own inspecting and in the process to ignore many NRC rules.* The Browns Ferry fire was caused by the careless action of workmen engaged in a major construction job in a critical room of the reactor while it was in operation. (The room was the so-called "cable spreading room" that exists in every reactor, where control cables from all over the plant converge before being fed into the control room, which is located directly above. This is perhaps the most vulnerable spot in every plant, its Achilles heel.) . . .

Though this dangerous job had been going on for several weeks before the fire—and though prior to the big fire there had already been a half-dozen smaller ones that spread—the NRC's safety inspectors were not even aware that any work was being done in this critical room. This is because NRC inspectors don't inspect plants. They merely visit the plants' management offices and inspect management's records, which they depend on to reveal safety problems. (As far as can be determined, no NRC inspector ever went inside the Browns Ferry spreading room. One inspector visited the plant the day before the fire, but when he left the premises he was in complete ignorance of the construction job.)

The fact that the plant's operator, the Tennessee Valley Authority, did not inform the NRC either of the job in progress, or of the fires it had caused, was a violation of one of the NRC's most important safety rules. . . . Subsequent to the fire, the NRC did not find TVA guilty of a "violation" of its rules, which could have carried severe penalties. Instead, it merely wrote a letter to TVA citing it for an "infraction," which carried no penalties of any kind. . . .

2. *In order to help keep nuclear construction costs down, the NRC allows its licensees to incorporate unsafe design features in their plants.* One of the basic safety principles of nuclear design is the concept known as "separation." This demands that all primary safety devices (pumps, generators, etc.) be physically separated from their emergency back-up units so that a single accident cannot knock them all out; for the same reason, the various devices' control cables must be routed to the control room along separate paths. In 1973, two years before the Browns Ferry fire, the NRC's (then AEC's) Director of Regulatory Standards wrote a memo saying . . . there was an "urgent need" to split control cables between two separate spreading rooms, and he put an "A-plus" priority on the necessity for a rule requiring dual spreading rooms.

However, an industry technical association, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers [IEEE], refused to okay the two-spreading-room requirement, since two rooms would cost more than one; as a result, no such rule was written. . . .

At the Browns Ferry plant, which in 1975 was brand-new and was considered a model of advanced design and construction, the spreading room was so jammed with cables (tens of thousands of them, filling the space wall to wall and floor to ceiling) that there was no room for safety aisles for firefighters. . . .

3. *The NRC allows plants to be built with specific items of equipment that it knows to be defective.* At the time of the Browns Ferry fire, the only standard for judging the combustibility of cables was drawn up by the IEEE. As was well known at the time to both the NRC and the nuclear industry, this standard, called IEEE-383, allowed highly combustible cables to be classified as non-combustible. Nevertheless, the NRC allowed the industry to use IEEE-383 as its sole criterion for cable combustibility. This was the reason the Browns Ferry fire spread so rapidly; many

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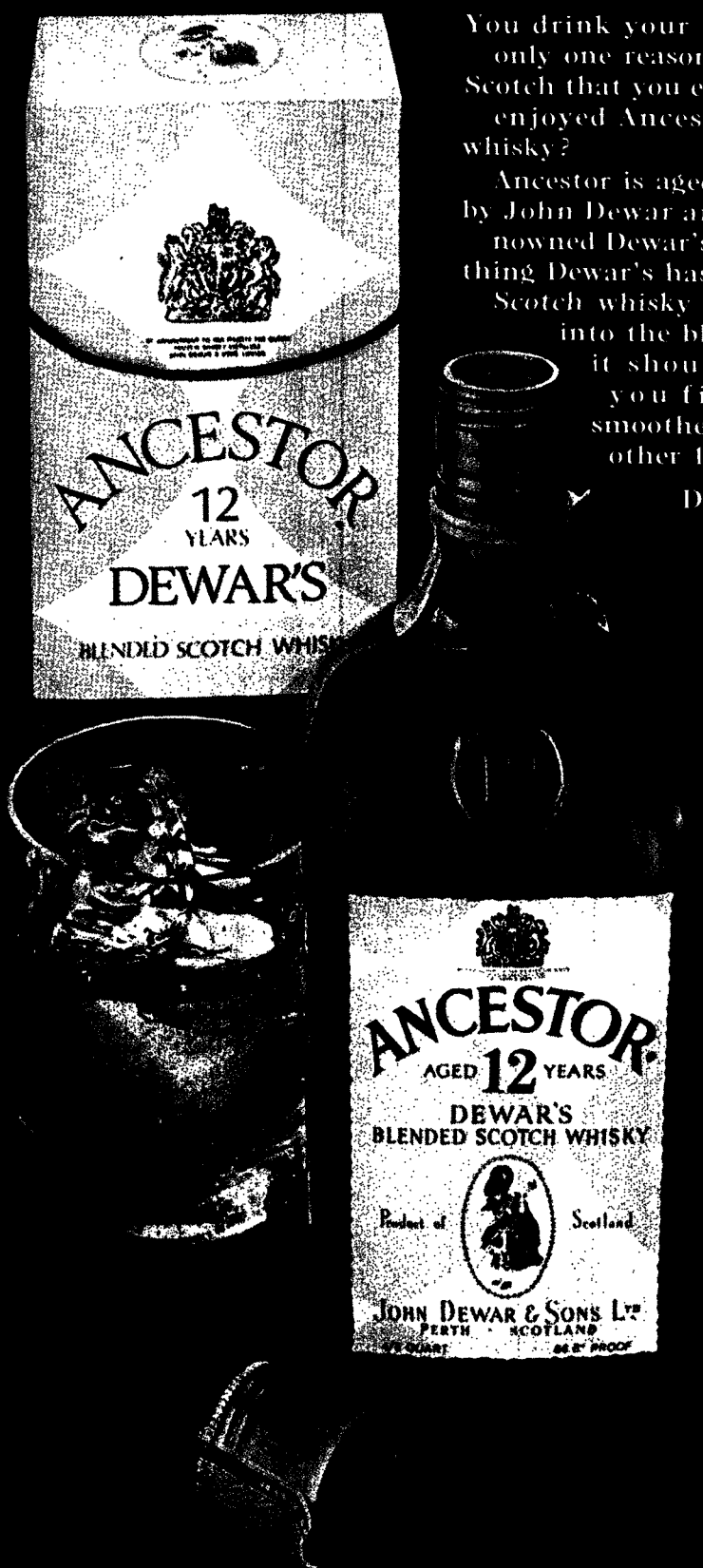

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of the "non-combustible" cables acted literally as kindling, sending flames shooting up to the trays full of cables only a few inches above them and splattering flaming drops of molten plastic on other trays only a few inches to the side or below.

THESE are just a sampling of the instances of NRC dereliction that were revealed by the Browns Ferry fire. Since all of this happened two and a half years ago and has been fully documented in a half-dozen reports by insurance companies, the Underwriters Laboratory, and the NRC itself, one would think that by now the agency would have changed some of its defective rules and practices. But it has not done this. Its basic inspection policy is the same: to allow licensees to inspect themselves and to depend on them for information about dangerous conditions. It still has no rule requiring dual spreading rooms, and almost all plants now in the design and construction stage have single spreading rooms. Its sole cable combustibility standard continues to be IEEE-383. Thus, not only do currently operating plants still suffer from the same defects as those revealed at Browns Ferry, but plants will continue to be put into operation for many years to come with the same defects.

Incidentally, Mr. McCracken cites the AEC/NRC-sponsored Rasmussen Report as proving that the chance of a meltdown accident is extremely remote. He might be interested to learn that the Rasmussen Report—which was issued before the Browns Ferry fire and purported to analyze every conceivable "accident chain" that could lead to a meltdown—failed even to mention the possibility of a fire occurring in a spreading room.

I would be interested to learn from Mr. McCracken why his article ignored the charges of NRC negligence and misfeasance in safety enforcement that have been made by Ralph Nader, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and others whom he accuses of demagoguery. I would also be interested to hear whether, in view of the facts revealed by the Browns Ferry fire and its aftermath, he believes that U.S. nuclear plants are built and operated as safely as they should be.

JAMES NATHAN MILLER
Reader's Digest
Pleasantville, New York

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN writes:

Edmond Edward has pinpointed a very serious problem that becomes more apparent the more one studies the nuclear debate. Not only do the media themselves seem almost universally anti-nuclear when stating opinion, but their preference is clearly manifested in their factual coverage.

The Boston *Globe*, for example, now regularly uses the highly charged label "nuke" on headlines and editorial titles. A recent story in the same paper reporting the bare fact that the government had exploded some sort of device using reactor plutonium began with a lead that the story itself did not support, announcing that the explosion had erased all doubts about just how useful reactor plutonium might be for bombs.

Recently, ABC broadcast a documentary on nuclear power divided into two separate productions, one against and one for. The brilliantly done pro-nuclear half, narrated by Jules Bergman, publicized a large number of important facts that normally never appear in media discussions of nuclear power. (A team of army assault commandos was shown taking fourteen hours to blast their way into a plutonium repository with high explosives, and there were photographs of trucks carrying plutonium shipping casks crashing into walls at 80 miles an hour without damage to the casks.) But even more striking was the anti-nuclear half. It was freed of the necessity to balance the argument, and yet aside from an animation showing a loss-of-coolant accident that simply ignored the emergency cooling systems, it was barely distinguishable from the conventional coverage on TV, which is not balanced at all.

IT is difficult not to agree with so generous a critic as Ludwig Seligsberger, but I am not so persuaded as he of the utility of mirror solar plants. Although they take up less space than non-mirror plants, 14 square miles is still very much larger than the area required by a nuclear plant. As a fellow-townsman of Mr. Seligsberger's, I am acutely aware that there is no desert within a couple of thousand miles of where I live. Moreover, the cost projections for such plants remain dismaying. No one would be happier than I were central solar generation to prove successful in the long run, but I don't think it's wise to base national policy on the hope that it will. Nuclear power already works.

JOEL WEISMAN'S comments are very useful, but I remain a little perplexed as to why CANDU reactors work in Canada and won't work here, and I still wonder whether Edward Teller is not right in diagnosing their fatal disease as the NIH syndrome—Not Invented Here. I suggested that nuclear opponents worried about proliferation urge the acquisition of a CANDU reactor for research purposes primarily as a more useful activity to occupy them. But there also seems to me to be great promise in the thorium-cycle heavy-water reactor, and we ought not sit back unless we assume that it will be developed anyway, and as fast as possible, in Canada.

HAVING denied that he plans to detail my "numerous scientific errors," Bernard T. Feld details four truths implying four errors on my part.

"Radioactivity is *not* neutron emission." I never defined radioactivity thus or indeed in any other way. Although neutron emission is a form—far from the only one—of radiation (whence the neutron bomb) the only type of radiation I specifically identified as such was alpha particle emission. A minimum adherence to the text of an essay would appear to be required of those who wish to criticize it.

"The first experimental nuclear power reactors were *not* breeders." Although Mr. Feld neglects to tell us what he considers to have been the first experimental reactor to generate power, he appears to be simply in error on this point. The first generation of power in a nuclear reactor occurred in 1952, by the AEC's EBR-1 reactor in Idaho. For the details, I refer the interested reader to *The Atomic Shield*, by R. G. Hewlett and F. Duncan. A minimum adherence to the historical record would likewise seem to be required of critics.

"There is no physical law that prohibits the production, in a reactor, of more fuel than is consumed." Quite so. That is what I said in my article. I denied, correctly enough, that a breeder reactor can *create* more fuel than it consumes. I then went on to say that a breeder "can produce more plutonium from U-238 than it burns." Again, I wish Mr. Feld

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were a more careful reader than he appears to have been.

"Thorium is not a fissionable element." As it happens, I did at one point carelessly refer to thorium, which is fertile, as fissionable. I did not repeat this inconsequential error in my discussion of reactors using thorium. None of the other "errors," had they in fact been such, would have been consequential. I presume that had Mr. Feld thought he found errors that actually affected the argument, he would have cited them.

"Etc., etc." Such vague allegations of further error are a shabby tactic, foreign to respectable intellectual controversy. No doubt Mr. Feld is aware that there is no way to rebut an unspecified charge of this sort. As soon as I received a copy of his letter, I wrote him asking for a specification of these other errors. In his reply he presented what he called a "total list." It contained no errors but rather a list of truths. Four of the nine duplicated his list above, but he has withdrawn his inaccurate claim that the first experimental power reactor was not a breeder, now noting accurately but pointlessly that the first commercial reactors were not breeders. His other statements are, with one exception, true statements about nuclear power that either agree with my article or which are not contradicted by it. The exception is my regrettable but inconsequential omission of the brief existence of neptunium-239 in the series of reactions by which Pu-239 is produced from U-238. Thus, Mr. Feld finds my work scientifically accurate save for unimportant errors.

I am sorry that Mr. Feld was so offended by my characterization of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. I meant not to characterize the balance of editorial selection, of which there is some, if one understands that despite the magazine's title, the pieces against nuclear energy are often written by people who are not scientists at all, let alone atomic ones; I meant, rather, to characterize the editorial policy. Mr. Feld himself is the author of an editorial that praises the Carter energy policy, that is, which accepts a substantial portion of the anti-nuclear dogma.

Mr. Feld's reference to "knee-jerk conservatism" would be merely laughable to anyone who knows my work. As a matter of fact, if one considers the issue in ideological terms, the conservatives—indeed, the reactionaries—are those who wish to dismantle a new energy system and replace it with an older one. And the key issues are not ideological, but technical: whether or not nuclear fission is an acceptably safe form of power generation. Mr. Feld does not address this issue. Even had he got my ideology right, he should not judge my views on that basis, any more than I ought to judge the scientific quality of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* merely because it criticized Israel for the raid on Entebbe.

I am puzzled by his bizarre claim that I pretend to speak for the American intellectual and academic community. Nonsense. I speak for myself alone and he can cite no word of mine to the contrary.

ALTHOUGH the labor is arduous, I cannot beg off dealing with Marvin Resnikoff's many errors—and worse.

He begins by hopelessly entangling two issues that are quite separate. The first is nuclear proliferation, i.e., the acquisition of nuclear weapons by states that do not have them. As I said, I believe that the spread of breeder technology makes such proliferation possible. I also believe the spread of breeder technology to be inevitable, whatever the United States does about it. Our present policy denies us the benefits of breeders without preventing proliferation. But this issue is irrelevant to reactor-grade plutonium. Any nation with a light-water reactor can operate it so as to produce weapons-grade plutonium. It would be even simpler to produce weapons-grade plutonium in research reactors, as the Indians appear to have done.

The second issue is whether terrorists could acquire reactor-grade plutonium from the fuel cycle and use it to make bombs. Contrary to Mr. Resnikoff's statement, I did not assert the impossibility of such bombs, merely the great difficulty.

I am not quite certain what he means by "reactor-grade plutonium of simple design." Plutonium itself has no design, simple or complex. Perhaps he is trying to say that a bomb of simple design can utilize reactor-grade plutonium. The Lawrence-Livermore report he mentions is still classified except for the fact that a device has been exploded; thus I cannot comment on it. Perhaps he has had a peek.

And the fact that ERDA has exploded a device made from reactor plutonium tells us nothing about the usefulness of reactor plutonium for terrorist bombs. Nothing could be more likely—or less relevant—than that an advanced nuclear power should be able to make some sort of explosive device out of reactor plutonium. Mr. Resnikoff does not note that the yield, efficiency, and size of the "device" are still classified. The fact that ERDA called it a "device" is strongly suggestive that it was not a practical bomb.

I never suggested that plutonium ought not to be safeguarded, merely that it can be safeguarded by methods consistent with a democratic society. The fact that we have safeguarded the plutonium used in weapons production without repressive measures is persuasive evidence for this belief.

Mr. Resnikoff's vague scenario for stealing plutonium is no more than that. His mere assertion that he finds it credible does not pass for serious argument on the matter.

I did not deal with such fissionables as neptunium-237 because no one is proposing to separate them from reactor fuel. It should be noted that this separation is not something that can be done by a mad terrorist in his basement—it would require an expensive reprocessing plant suited to the purpose. When and if someone proposes to undertake such separation, it will be necessary to develop safeguards.

Having thoroughly obfuscated the question of plutonium, Mr. Resnikoff launches into an extraordinary series of half-truths and untruths.

• I nowhere expressed doubt that radiation can cause cancer. Indeed, since I stated in so many words my belief that it can, I wonder whether Mr. Resnikoff and I are referring to the same article. I also maintained that the total number of cancer deaths caused by nuclear energy is very low, much less per megawatt than the number of deaths caused by coal.

• Mr. Resnikoff is correct in pointing out that my figure for the maximum public dose was for gaseous emissions, but when liquid emissions are included, the total is not 10 mrem but 8. That is, the permitted level is greater by an amount less than the extra radiation one absorbs flying across the country, or that a resident of Dallas might get from a three-week

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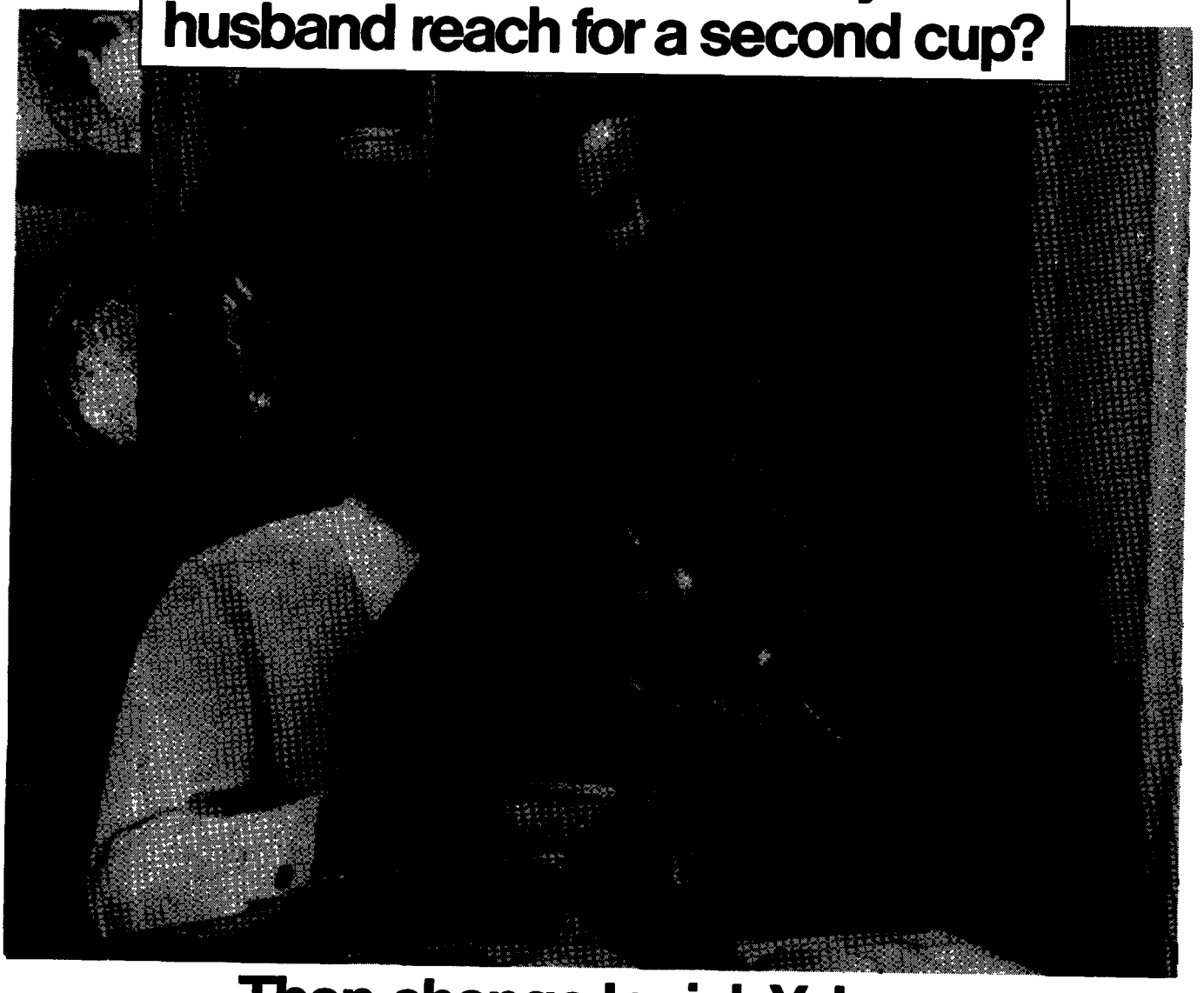

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visit to Denver, or that anyone might get from six months working in a building faced with granite.

The boundary dose does not include direct radiation from solid waste for the good reason that this radiation does not reach the boundary. One might assume from Mr. Resnikoff that the ME gate at Nine Mile Point is the main entrance, but it is not at the boundary, but well within the plant, at the internal boundary between Units I and II. It is about fifty feet from a waste-storage building. To say that if one were to stand at this gate solidly for a year one would absorb 1457 mrem is like saying that someone who keeps his head in a pail of water for a year will die. The remark is true but irrelevant. People don't stand at the gate for a year, but drive through it; and their total yearly exposure must be within limits that vary as to age, previous exposure, and other factors but which are always substantially lower than Mr. Resnikoff's figure.

Finally, his figure can be put into perspective by realizing that a full set of back X-rays might expose one to the equivalent of 32,000 mrem in a few minutes—more than most nuclear workers receive in a decade.

The 10-mrem limit is a reactor-design figure, set to establish targets for designers. In a sense, then, Mr. Resnikoff is correct in saying that when there are three reactors at a site, the design maxima can be multiplied by three. But only in theory, for as part of the licensing process, the NRC establishes limits for each site, taking into account its special characteristics, such as closeness to a city. These site limits are not expanded by the addition of another reactor. Mr. Resnikoff ignores this, as well as the fact that if a plant should actually reach 4 per cent of its permitted emission, it must conduct an investigation and report to the NRC.

• I did not deal explicitly with occupational doses at nuclear reactors, although they are included in the figures I cited for deaths caused by a 1000-MWe nuclear reactor. Considering the 100 coal miners or so killed each year, and the thousands who die from black lung disease, I am surprised that Mr. Resnikoff raises the issue at all. Nuclear energy is occupationally far more benign than the only practical alternative source.

• I clearly cited Colorado's low cancer rate to indicate the comparative insignificance of radiation as a cause of cancer, not to deny its existence.

• Mr. Resnikoff quotes my statement that there is no evidence from actual experience with human beings that radiation causes genetic damage to them, and then cities four studies purporting to contradict me. Incredible as it may seem, not one of these four studies deals with genetic damage. I hardly know which is more disturbing: to think that Mr. Resnikoff does not understand what genetic damage is, or that he does understand it and cites these studies knowing that they are irrelevant.

There is a further unintended irony in the first two studies: the mean dose given the Israeli children is said to be "only" 6.5 rad—a dose equivalent to 6,500 mrems, or 650 times the exposure allowed at the boundary line for a nuclear reactor by the NRC's design guides, and 650,000 times the exposure incurred from living within a 50-mile range of a nuclear reactor. This exposure, it should be remembered, is itself only 1 per cent of the exposure from color television. One needs to appreciate that: the average American is more threatened by the radiation from color television than from nuclear reactors. The doses reported in the *Lancet* article, ranging from 300 to 800 mrems, are still many times the exposure permitted at the boundary of a reactor. These X-ray exposures are, of course, low-level radiation, and that they are so much greater than the radiation from nuclear reactors shows how minimal reactor radiation really is.

The issue here is not whether people will get cancer from nuclear energy. Of course they will. But they will get very much less of it than from the alternative: coal.

• Next, Mr. Resnikoff alleges that I did not consider health effects from the fuel cycle. But I did, for these were calculated in the figure cited for the total health effect of a 1000-MWe plant. Further, he engages in a weird bit of numerology, conflating total cancers and cancers per year. If the NRC were to claim —as it does not—that the health effects of a tailings pile were limited to a forty-year period, there might be some point to Mr. Resnikoff's objection to the figure of 0.144 lung cancers a year. Mr. Resnikoff does not note that by burning up uranium a 1000-MWe reactor also *reduces* the amount of radioactivity in the biosphere. Bernard Cohen has pointed out that nuclear reactors burn up considerable amounts of U-234, a major source of radon, and that any true accounting of the medical effects of nuclear generation must include these credits as well as debits. Cohen suggests that over a 500,000-year span, one 1000-MWe nuclear reactor would save 130 lives through the burn-up of U-234. It might be remembered that through 500,000 years of operation a 1000-MWe coal-fired plant would kill between 15,000,000 and 55,000,000 people.

With regard to reducing the risk from mill tailings, I naturally support any reasonable measures to lower the already small health risk from nuclear power. But I am opposed to proposals vastly to increase our health risks by abandoning nuclear power.

• In his next comment, Mr. Resnikoff continues his conflation of yearly figures and total figures. The "hypothetical" deaths to which I referred were not deaths from cancer, which do occur, if not in numbers comparable to those caused by coal, but from reactor accidents, some of which will, inevitably, occur over a very long time span, and which must be figured into the total.

• Mr. Resnikoff's discussion of the relative radioactivity of coal and uranium would be merely amusing if it did not come from a scientist. First of all, uranium is not the only radioactive element in coal. There is also radium, polonium, and thorium. More important, the radioactive material in a nuclear reactor is not blown out of a smokestack, but carefully contained within the reactor with only minor emission permitted. The fact is that coal-fired plants emit considerably more radioactive material into the atmosphere—by one estimate, several hundred times more—than is permitted for nuclear plants. The amounts are in either case trivial, and I cited those for coal only to suggest the inconsistency of the anti-nuclear lobby.

• Even by Mr. Resnikoff's reckoning, a coal-fired plant produces approximately *three* times the solid waste of a nuclear plant. And as much as 10 per cent is disposed of as landfill, little of it in locations as remote as the typical uranium mill. But mill tailings are not an inescapable part of a nuclear economy. A breeder economy could be

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They Wanted A Job But Not At That Price.

Teri DeLoache, 19, and Karin Seritis, 20, are two bright attractive college girls in Oakland, Calif., who wanted to work as waitresses to help pay their way through school.

They were willing to join a union to get their jobs—but they didn't bargain for the "after hours assignments" their union bosses had in mind for them.

Brown-eyed, blonde-haired Teri was interviewed by the secretary of the union. He came right to the point: "You have a great body. You could make a lot of money."

Teri turned down his offer to "work" conventions, keep an apartment for male visitors, take trips with businessmen and pose for a photographer. "Now I can't get a job referral by the union," she reveals.

Karin, a warm-smiling outgoing girl with short brown hair and a make-up free complexion, was approached by the same union official. "He detailed a lot of sex-for-money ideas and said he wanted to test the merchandise."

When Karin refused and wrote a letter of complaint to the union's international office, she was pulled off her job. She got some "friendly" advice to withdraw her letter. "You're a pretty girl," said a union member, "I'd hate to see that ruined."

To put it bluntly, these two young women were denied employment and their very lives threatened because they refused to submit to prostitution.

They courageously decided to fight back, retaining a lawyer in November 1976, who filed a complaint charging mental duress and harassment. Incredibly, the lawyer's mother was savagely beaten by an attacker who warned, "You tell your son to drop this case."

He won't, thanks to the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which entered the case in March 1977.

An amended complaint has been filed, charging unfair representation, sex discrimination, illegal use of the union hiring hall and asking $1 million in punitive damages.

Teri and Karin were fortunate. They found help. But how many other Teris and Karins haven't?

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is helping everyone it can. It is currently assisting individual workers in more than 75 cases involving academic and political freedom, freedom from union violence, and the right to work for government without paying a private organization for that privilege.

If you'd like information on how you can help workers like Teri DeLoache and Karin Seritis, write:

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run for hundreds of years on the U-238 tails now left from the enrichment process; there would be no need for further mining; and existing tailings could be buried.

• Mr. Resnikoff's statement that a centralized solar plant "is being built" in Southern California is false. No construction contracts have been let for this facility, which is estimated to cost some $125 million for a plant of 10-megawatt capacity. That is to say, this plant, when completed, would supply approximately 1 per cent of the electricity produced by a contemporary nuclear plant. To equal the capacity of such a plant would require 10 such solar plants, costing—if there are no overruns—$12.5 billion, a capital cost at least ten times the nuclear equivalent. If there are economies of scale in making large, single plants, they are not demonstrated in plants "being built." One must remember that nuclear power is frequently attacked as being too capital-intensive. These data are a commentary on the practicality of such plants, as well as on Mr. Resnikoff's disturbingly carefree approach to facts.

• On area requirements for solar power, Mr. Resnikoff's technique is to inflate the area required for a nuclear plant by adding the mill-tailings area and then to claim that solar plants require "only" twice as much space He ignores the fact that the uranium mills are located in comparatively remote areas, while many of the solar plants would have to be located near centers of population.

• Mr. Resnikoff claims that environmentalists have contributed very little to the delay in constructing reactors and thus to reactor costs. He then cites an article by Irwin Bupp of Harvard in support of this claim. Anyone who turns to the Bupp article (*Technology Review*, February 1975) will find that Mr. Resnikoff's claim is a shocking misrepresentation. The Bupp article contains these statements: ". . . intervention of concerned organizations and individuals at the public-hearing stage of the AEC's licensing procedures has directly caused delays of a year of longer in the construction of certain reactors—Vermont Yankee, San Onofre . . . another delaying and costly development was the so-called Calvert Cliffs Decision, which established that nuclear plants, like all other projects, had to file thorough environmental impact statements . . . the ruling contributed significantly to nuclear plant construction-cost increases." Bupp notes that the cost of a given reactor is closely dependent on the length of the licensing period, and gives an example of how, in a single case, intervenors raised the cost of the Millstone #2 reactor in Connecticut by some $5 million. And, finally, the article refers quite explicitly to "the crucial role of the opponents of nuclear power in the cost picture."

• He is wise to suggest that economists may disagree with his claim that the old and the poor do not own appliances. He does not trouble to cite any evidence for this bizarre assertion, although given his ingenious use of the Bupp article, just about anything—*Gilgamesh*, probably—would serve. To suggest that incremental cost pricing, which would drive up prices and taxes, would somehow benefit the old and poor, is Mr. Resnikoff's own bad little joke.

• He roasts most of the ancient chestnuts on waste disposal. The military wastes at Hanford are in any event irrelevant to the future of nuclear power. They are already there and will have to be dealt with no matter what is done about power generation. As it happens, the majority of the high-level wastes at West Valley are not commercial but military, reprocessed out of material from a government plutonium reactor at Hanford. The problems at West Valley are at least partially attributable to a premature move into a disposal process when there was no urgent need to do so. These problems too will be with us whatever happens to nuclear power, and may in fact prove useful in further refining existing processes.

• Some educational progress has been made when a nuclear critic actually admits the existence of the calcination-vitrification process, but Mr. Resnikoff treats it with a fierce skepticism that he would not and does not apply to solar technology.

• The problem of storing spent fuel elements is, in the short run, irrelevant to the development of final storage facilities. The fuel-rod problem could be solved either by restarting fuel reprocessing or by building larger storage facilities for the fuel rods themselves. In the absence of reprocessing, even a fully functioning calcination and vitrification process could do nothing to relieve the fuel-rod problem.

Mr. Resnikoff's letter demonstrates with dreadful clarity the intellectual confusion and shabby practice that pervade anti-nuclear extremism.

I HAVE NOT called Frances Gendlin a scientific illiterate, but if she wishes so to identify herself, I cannot dispute the characterization.

Although she will not specify them, her illiteracy does not keep her from seeing darkly hinted inaccuracies in my article. Perhaps Mr. Resnikoff is the knowledgeable and accomplished anti-nuclear scientist of whom she speaks.

Miss Gendlin appears to believe that the world is divided between professional scientists and scientific illiterates. But there is of course a middle ground. Miss Gendlin holds the curious view that certain of my articles prove by their very topics that I cannot be scientifically literate, although she does not indicate how this may be. Certainly I am not as qualified as the body of scientists who have spoken out against nuclear energy. On the other hand, neither am I as qualified as the even larger and more precisely qualified body of scientists who have spoken out in *support* of it. I am surprised that Miss Gendlin would suggest that we laymen ought to sit back and listen to the scientists, because if we do that, we will support nuclear energy.

Miss Gendlin is apparently unaware of the fact that *no* Nobel laureate in nuclear physics opposes nuclear energy, while several Nobel physics laureates with qualification in the nuclear area, including Hans Bethe and Eugene Wigner, support it. She also seems unaware that the American Health Physics Society, with a membership of 3,400 scientists who are experts on the biological effects of radiation, has endorsed nuclear power, as has a large number of other professional associations in the relevant fields. In 1975, 25,000 scientists and engineers presented a petition supporting the development of nuclear energy to the President.

The scientists opposing nuclear energy are, on the whole, qualified in areas far from nuclear energy. Apparently Miss Gendlin and James Marshall naively believe that qualification in one area of science is qualification in all, a position equivalent to believing that

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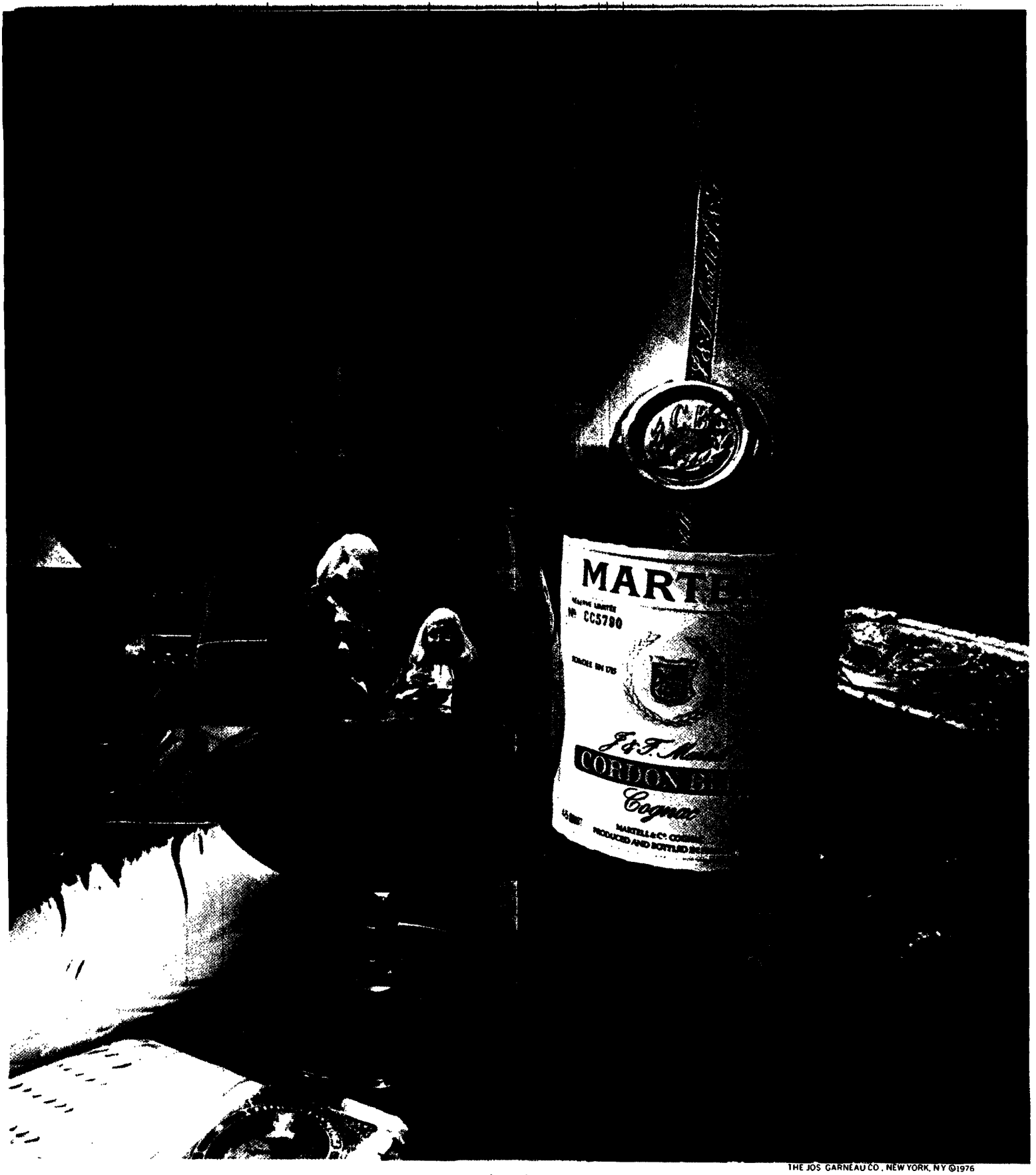

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ONCE IN A GREAT WHILE an artist appears whose work is not only beautiful and utterly original, but whose vision seems uniquely suited to the taste of a particular audience of art lovers. Just such a happy conjunction has occurred in the case of the young American artist David Bennett, from whom the editors of COMMENTARY have commissioned this strikingly brilliant original print. Two hundred impressions have been made. One of them has been presented to the Jewish Museum in New York, where it now forms a part of the permanent collection. The plates have been destroyed, and no more impressions will ever be executed.

THE WORK The venerable patriarch Jacob is captured at the moment of bestowing his precious gift, the coat of many colors, on the child of old age whom he loved, as the Bible says, "more than any other of his sons." At the center, Joseph the dreamer looms monumentally as his older brothers look on in distress and envy and his father wraps the legendary robe around him.

THE TECHNIQUE In this linoleum cut, the artist has utilized a highly decorative style with simplified forms expressed in bright, flat colors. Never has the coat of many colors appeared so rainbow-like or breathtakingly vivid. By limiting himself to the three primary colors of red, blue, and yellow, juxtaposing and surprinting to explore their potential for richness and contrast, the artist has achieved a technical tour-de-force in which surface brilliance and depth of feeling combine to produce a work of sinuous beauty.

THE ARTIST David Bennett is a rare phenomenon. He is an American whose initial recognition has been earned abroad, and whose acclaim has turned largely on his sensitive and profound handling of religious subjects. Since his first one-man exhibition at the Galerie Delfs in Munich in 1974, his work has been seen and repeatedly applauded throughout Western Europe. A typical European review extols the jewel-like effect of his work; another compares him to Chagall "in his ability to free biblical representations from crusty traditions and present them anew." Bennett's first American one-man exhibition will open next fall at the Maurice Spertus Museum in Chicago, and will travel from there to the Judah L. Magnes Museum in San Francisco, the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles, and the Jewish Museum in New York, among others.

THE EDITION A limited edition of two hundred impressions of *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* has been executed in Europe by the firm of George Andor, and these, signed and numbered by the artist, have been handsomely framed in New York City at the Gallery of Graphic Arts. The 17"x20½" printed image has been matted to 25"x30". In a gold-toned metal frame, with all-rag white mat, *Joseph's Coat of Many Colors* is a work of enduring artistic value.

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Joseph's Coat of Many Colors by David Bennett

TWO HUNDRED IMPRESSIONS of this brilliant original print have been commissioned by the editors of Commentary and issued in a single, serially numbered and signed edition. Handsomely framed, they are available only to readers of Commentary and members of the Jewish Book Club, and there is a limit of one to a purchaser.

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if one knows sociology one also knows French. Mr. Marshall's list includes several biologists, several chemists, and an astrophysicist. The preeminent nuclear authority on the list is Dr. Edward Teller. What are we to make of Mr. Marshall's claim that Dr. Teller is anti-nuclear? Teller, who travels about at his own expense opposing nuclear moratoria!

Unable to dispute me on content, Miss Gendlin disputes me on tone and is joined in this by Mr. Marshall. It appears that people judge my tone by whether they agree with me; several of my commentators and correspondents, nuclear physicists among them, have praised my dispassionate tone. If Miss Gendlin and Mr. Marshall will reread me a little more carefully, they will see that I reserve my passion not for discussions of facts but for those who distort them. Miss Gendlin and Mr. Marshall reverse this process.

In dealing with waste disposal, Mr. Marshall simply repeats arguments already refuted in my article. If he disagrees with this refutation, surely it is up to him to show how and why.

The concept of "man-made" radiation, Mr. Marshall's novel contribution to the nuclear debate, has no scientific basis. Radioactivity is, after all, an entirely natural phenomenon, a fact that has, oddly enough, not endeared it to the customary proponents of the "natural." And Mr. Marshall's arithmetic is shaky. Nuclear energy does not multiply background radiation by a factor of 3; rather, it increases it at most by about twelve-thousandths of 1 per cent.

Mr. Marshall's discussion of terrorists does not get around the essential problem I propounded in my article: if it is really so easy for a gang of terrorists to develop a nuclear capability, why does it appear to be so hard for nation-states?

Mr. Marshall's final paragraph is a good example of the carelessness of many nuclear opponents. He begins by implying that I cited the National Council of Churches on the question of radioactive waste. But I did not; the statement of the Council I quoted was on the use of plutonium as fuel. He then says that the Council "pointed out" that protecting us from nuclear wastes "would, in the long run, lead to a police state." But the Council's claim that this would be the result of using plutonium for fuel is no more than a claim, one that is contradicted by the fact that we safeguard weapons plutonium without any such repressive machinery. The nuclear debate is badly served when people like Mr. Marshall repeat unsubstantiated claims as if they were fact.

IN COMPANY with other critics, Messrs. Hubbard, Bridenbaugh, and Minor provide a minimum of specificity, preferring to make accusations of "belittling" and "demeaning" rather than grasping the technical and scientific issues involved.

In my statement abut the income available to the three engineers I was following a report in the September 8, 1976 *Energy Daily*, which reported such an arrangement with the Union of Concerned Scientists, Project Survival, and the successor to Californians for Nuclear Safeguards. I understand from a highly-placed source at MHB Technical Associates that its principals did in fact have a consulting contract with at least Project Survival that provided them with a monthly income of $1,500 each, this figure having been chosen as being what they needed to live on, and I learn from the Union of Concerned Scientists that MHB continues to do consulting work for it. I suspect that the difference of opinion between us may hang on the word "guarantee." I did not mean to imply that there was any agreement to provide a life sinecure.

I am reassured to learn that it is through stock ownership, rather than through the GE profit-sharing plan, that Messrs. Hubbard, Bridenbaugh and Minor continue to share in GE profits. It makes all the difference in the world.

IT IS curious that James Nathan Miller should call my article a "compendium of the nuclear industry's arguments," since I did not go to the industry for my arguments. His objection is in large part to my having written an article on the topic I did rather than on another one. My primary concern was not with remediable defects in the regulatory structure, but rather with the extremist view that nuclear energy is too dangerous to be used, and the manifold errors underlying this claim. I mentioned the problem of insuring adequate regulation in passing while discussing the nuclear referenda.

As for the Browns Ferry fire itself, "coming close to a meltdown" is really not a very precise term. I would agree with Mr. Miller that there was an extraordinary amount of human error involved, not only in the design of the plant but also in the initiation of the fire and its aftermath. Nuclear technology is regularly held to be fragile and unforgiving, to be unable to tolerate any error. Yet at Browns Ferry it forgave and tolerated much. As Petr Beckmann has pointed out, the real victims of the Browns Ferry fire have been those killed by the coal-fired generation made necessary during the repair of the reactor.

If Mr. Miller had read my article more carefully, he would have noted that I expressed reservations about the Rassmussen Report, including its possibly inadequate attention to common-mode failure, probably the most dangerous element in reactor fires.

I do not believe that anything in this world is done as well as it should be. Arguing that nuclear power is too dangerous to permit, however, is likely to make it more rather than less difficult to improve its excellent safety record.

Liberals & Looting

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What certainty Midge Decter displays ["Looting and Liberal Racism," September] as she assures us that the blackout looting in New York City's ghettos and certain poorer neighborhoods last July had nothing to do with the economic and social factors widely believed to have triggered that behavior! The looters looted because they were nasty, greedy, anti-social young people, the author tells us, and her sharp pen excoriates with equal vigor both perpetrators and anyone who would argue that the hopelessness of their lives and futures might possibly have been conducive to their destructive actions.

Miss Decter's translation of her personal convictions into unassailable truth might be more convincing, however, if it didn't run so consistently counter to the facts.

In the New York *Times* of April 7, 1977, we learn the following: "20,000 Youngsters Apply for Summer Jobs." With 700 tired and shivering young people lined up for their first chance to enroll for this summer's youth jobs, a West Side principal unlocked the doors of his junior high school at 3:30

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A.M. (the following morning) to shelter the anxious job seekers, among whom were about 200 girls. Some had waited since 1 P.M. on Tuesday (the preceding day). The waiting lines were photographed; I am certain there must have been some whites there, but one only saw black faces in the photographs. In Brownsville, 2,000 waited outside an elementary school for as long as five hours through the night, only to be told at 8:50 A.M. (the next morning) that no more than 500 could be interviewed during the day. The lineups in the Bronx began at 3 A.M., etc., etc.

We are further informed by Miss Decter of "all sorts of jobs that from one month or year to the next cannot find any takers." If this can be demonstrated, then in the name of heaven, let's have the kind of training and remedial programs for youth for which we have been pleading. However, if it is not a matter of skill but is, in fact, an unskilled job, Miss Decter argues that government is impeding the process of employment by insisting on a minumum wage, thus making unskilled labor too expensive. For years we have struggled to achieve the minimum-wage law; should we dispense with it now?

We are also given this information: "For large numbers of those young men on street corners, it does not pay to take a job." We of course agree completely with the implication of Miss Decter's statement that there is a dire need for the competition between "welfare" and the "job" to cease. In Washington, we are struggling to achieve this objective.

There is no doubt that this unfortunate behavior, including the "blackout" destructiveness, does exist among black young people and others, but there is the further and important query as to what inspires this destructive tendency. This is Miss Decter's answer with respect to the spree of the blackout looting: our young people, especially the blacks, "are getting the message from the liberal culture, more subtly but just as surely as from any old-time Southern sheriff, that they are, inherently and by virtue of their race, inferior. There are virtually no crimes they can commit that someone with great influence does not rush in to excuse on the grounds that we had no right to expect anything else." Elsewhere: "The message they are given, in short, is that they are not fully enough human to be held morally responsible for their own behavior."

It is indeed curious to tag liberalism with "excusing" or condoning anti-social conduct. If liberalism is to be related at all to the problem of irresponsible and destructive behavior, it is in the direction of *understanding* the misbehavior of our young people and doing something about its prevention or extinction. We see liberalism as "self-fulfillment within the framework of the common good." Misbehavior must be condemned and punished, but also understood and dealt with constructively.

We should also keep in mind that, unfortunately, there is a form of "white-collar" looting going on, both in public and private life, in and outside of Washington. The tarnished models of these adults are bound to have a damaging impact on our youth.

JOHN SLAWSON
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is, alas, far too much truth in Midge Decter's article for liberals not to be made uncomfortable, if not actuely disturbed, by it. Lines from Edna St. Vincent Millay, written in another context, are quite apposite: "Pity me that the heart is slow to learn/What the swift mind beholds at every turn."

But the article is nevertheless gravely flawed because it tells but one part of the whole truth and fails to tell so much that is crucial to a fuller understanding of the problem.

Of course the looting was disgraceful, and those liberals who excuse or condone this kind of behavior deserve to be excoriated. Though all human behavior is explainable, if we care to probe deeply enough, all human behavior is not excusable. It should not be forgotten that many of Hitler's Brown Shirts also were "disadvantaged" youths.

But among the factors that Miss Decter does not deal with at all, for example, is the reality that vast numbers of people in our society are bent on getting something for nothing, do so with impunity more often than not, and this fact is not lost on the poor in the urban ghettos. The nature of the opportunities available for respectable larceny, of course, may vary widely. Well-to-do citizens evade income taxes; landlords fail to deliver services they owe tenants; merchants give less than fair values to customers or withhold sales taxes they owe the city; employees steal merchandise from their employers; public officials and corporate executives pad expense accounts; workers "rip-off" employers and the community by consciously failing to do a full day's work for a full day's pay, secure in the awareness that their conduct is protected by their powerful unions; policemen are "on the take" from gamblers, pimps, and drug dealers.

These are but a few illustrations of the corruption which, tragically, is so pervasive in our society, a good deal of which is highly visible to the ghetto poor. It seems clear that a great many non-poor people are willing to do for material gain whatever they can manage to get away with. To intimate, as in effect Miss Decter does, that many of the black and brown poor are morally worse than the rest of us is poisonous. To blame their warped attitudes and behavior on liberals, though it does make for a dramatic article, is a gross oversimplification and, at least in part, a "red herring."

Miss Decter claims that there are all sorts of jobs "that from one month or year to the next cannot find any takers." She neglects to mention, however, what happened in New York City last spring when a limited number of minimum-wage summer jobs were made available to youths between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. As reported in the New York *Times* of April 7, 20,000 youngsters in poverty neighborhoods lined up in the cold many hours before the offices were even scheduled to begin to accept applications. In just one section of the South Bronx, a youth-job director said, "We could use 5,000 jobs," more than double the allotment.

Why did Miss Decter fail to weave into her article items like that one? Although it may not quite fit the message she is striving so hard (and with such consummate skill) to convey, it would have lent some of the balance and perspective which are so glaringly absent from the article.

SAMUEL RABINOVE
White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I was glad that Midge Decter, in her article, disagreed with the explanation given by civic souls that society's neglect contributed exces-

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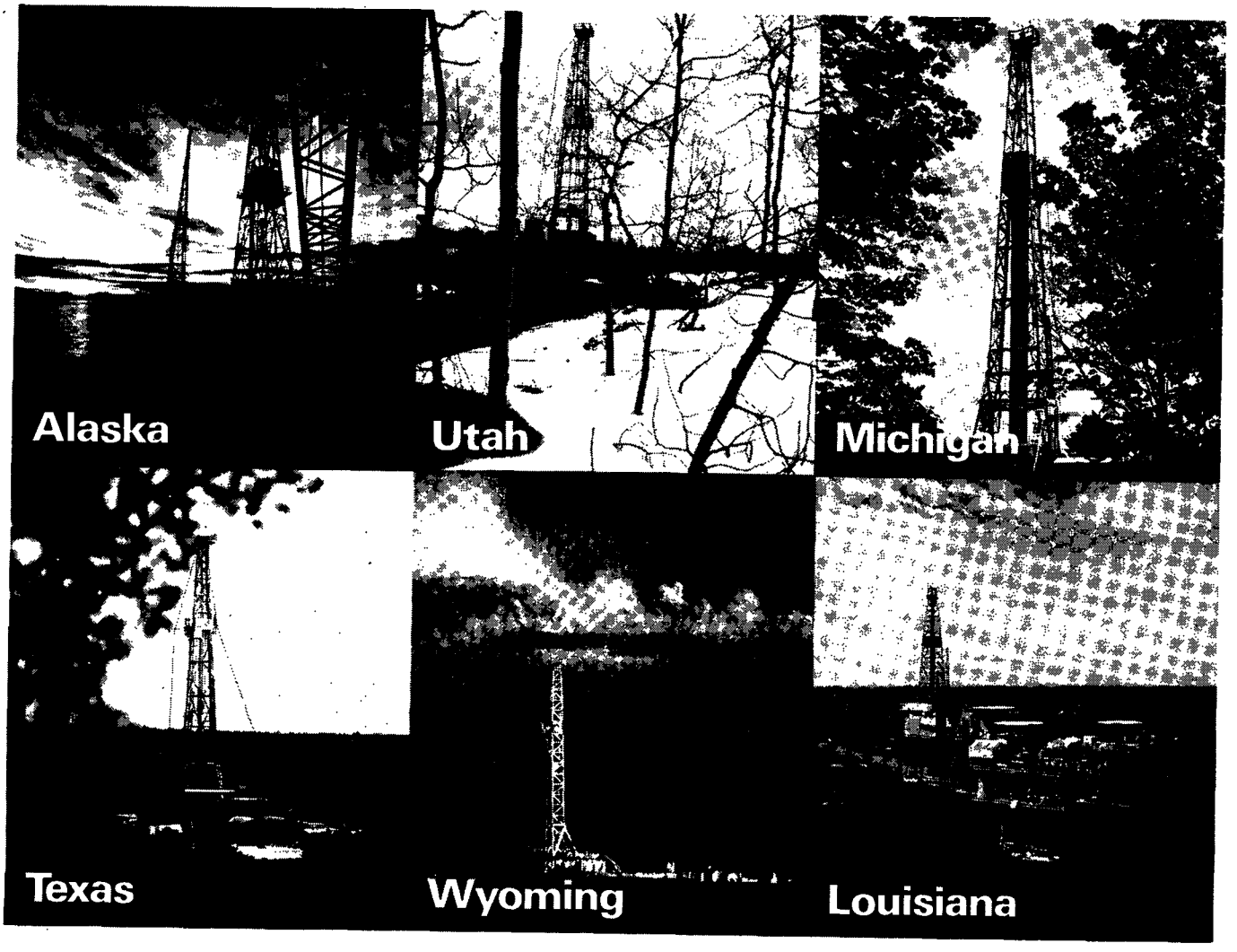

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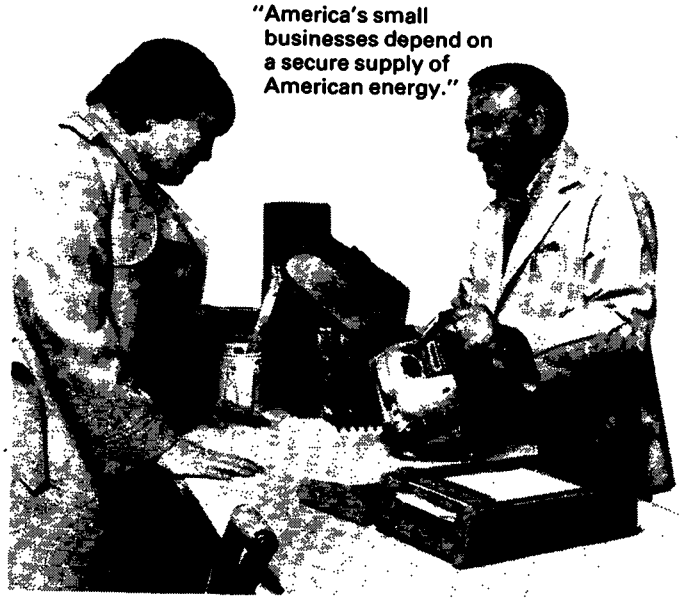

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sively to the raping of stores darkened by the electrical breakdown. Tax-burdened, dues-paying, work-ethic New Yorkers reading these views were thus twice victimized: on the one hand required to subsidize hundreds of programs designed to improve the living standards of the poor, and on the other accused of neglecting these same persons who were thus conditioned to loot the night the lights went out. Self-appointed spokesmen writing in the New York *Times* mercilessly reminded taxpayers that the programs of the 70's were failing; minority youth still neglected; rewarding jobs not available to ghetto victims; urban poor not keeping up with inflation; etc.

But such observations ignored the fact that middle-class residential areas, containing newly-created pockets of decent housing, were also victimized. The darkened streets and muted electronic safeguards did not inspire to lawlessness only the dwellers in the worst slums. In Brooklyn, for example, some idle poor residing comfortably under the rent-subsidy auspices took advantage of their new proximity to Flatbush Avenue to rip off small businesses there. The extent of the robberies was accelerated when aggressive looters who had initiated the break-ins were joined by spectators unable to resist an opportunity to beat the high cost of inflation.

MARTHA S. CHERKIS
Brooklyn, New York

MIDGE DECTER writes:

Although at rather different levels of asperity, the same two points are raised by Samuel Rabinove and John Slawson. One, there is a great deal of cynicism and corruption in the higher reaches of society; why not blame these, rather than prevailing liberal attitudes, for creating the atmosphere in which last summer's looting was bred? Two, given my assertion that large numbers of idle ghetto youth are in fact not interested in finding gainful employment, how can I account for the thousands who turned up for the summer-job program and had to be turned away?

In answer to the first, the argument from general corruption is, of course, precisely the sort of liberal "explanation" to which I was alluding. Surely neither Mr. Rabinove nor Dr. Slawson would advance such an argument to explain

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criminal behavior, say, in the New York City Police Department—not to mention the White House. Why, then, do they find it relevant in thinking about black youths smashing store windows in the darkness? I would prefer not to belabor the obvious by spelling out the answer.

On the second point—not unrelated to the first—what makes Mr. Rabinove and Dr. Slawson assume that the black kids who lined up for summer jobs were among the looters? What we *do* know about those arrested for looting was that an astonishing number of them were employed, many at jobs with decent pay, so that the very idea of the looting as a response to unemployment was, I am afraid, very early exposed as a "liberal excuse" and little more. The point I was trying to make about all those young men hanging out on street corners, Dr. Slawson, is that they are not some kind of collective blob of soft clay to be molded to the contours of social theory but *human beings* leading describable lives—as anyone who has ever troubled to *look* at them knows—and one does human beings neither kindness nor honor to deny those lives their moral, and thus also possibly immoral, dimension (the competition with jobs comes not only from welfare but from crime, and that is something that cannot be dealt with "in Washington," only in "the hearts and minds" of all of us).

Finally, a word about that summer-job program and the 20,000 applicants for it—because here once again there is a danger of our being choked on cant. Those summer jobs, as even so sympathetic and well-credentialed a liberal as Congresswoman Elizabeth Holtzman angrily announced after investigating the program, do not provide real or serious employment, but have become little more than a means of bribing kids to stay off the streets, with virtually nothing demanded of them in the way of either performance or attendance. They are, in short, plums, and everyone who lines up for them is not necessarily to be accounted earnest in the pursuit of work. I am sorry to put the matter so bluntly, but one is occasionally driven to brutal speech by the insistent innocence of one's interlocutors. Moreover, I suggest that Dr. Slawson might ask just about any white youngster in the city of New York why he saw only black faces in that newsphoto: it is nearly impossible to get one of those jobs if you are white unless you have high and at least slightly corrupt connections. What every kid in a city knows is something its leading social critics ought to know as well.

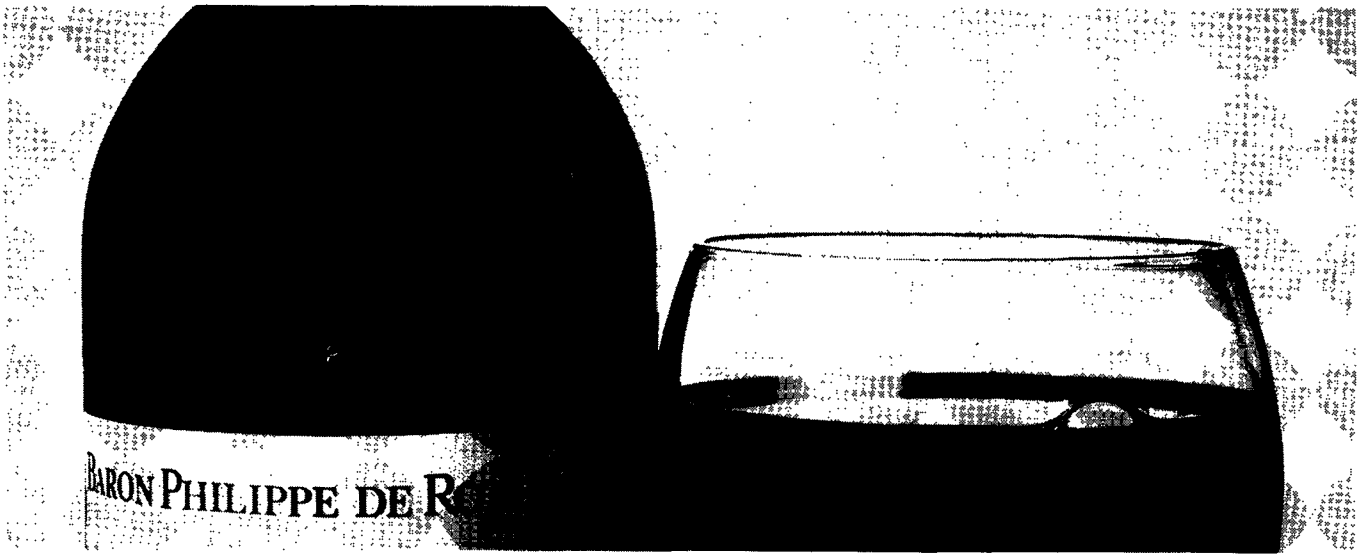
Lionel Trilling

To the Editor of Commentary:

I wish to collect the correspondence of Lionel Trilling with a view to possible publication. If anyone has letters from him, I should be grateful if copies were sent to me c/o Mrs. Rita Vaughan, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 757 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Their receipt will be acknowledged.

Diana Trilling

New York City



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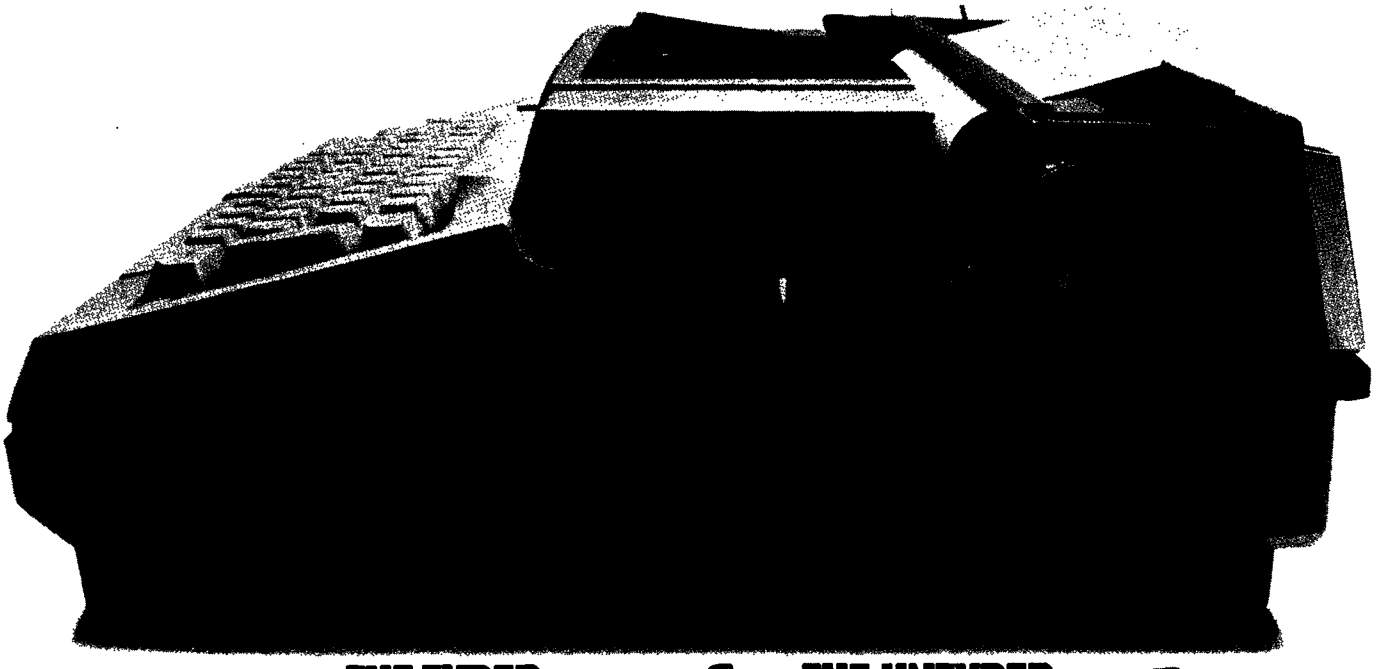

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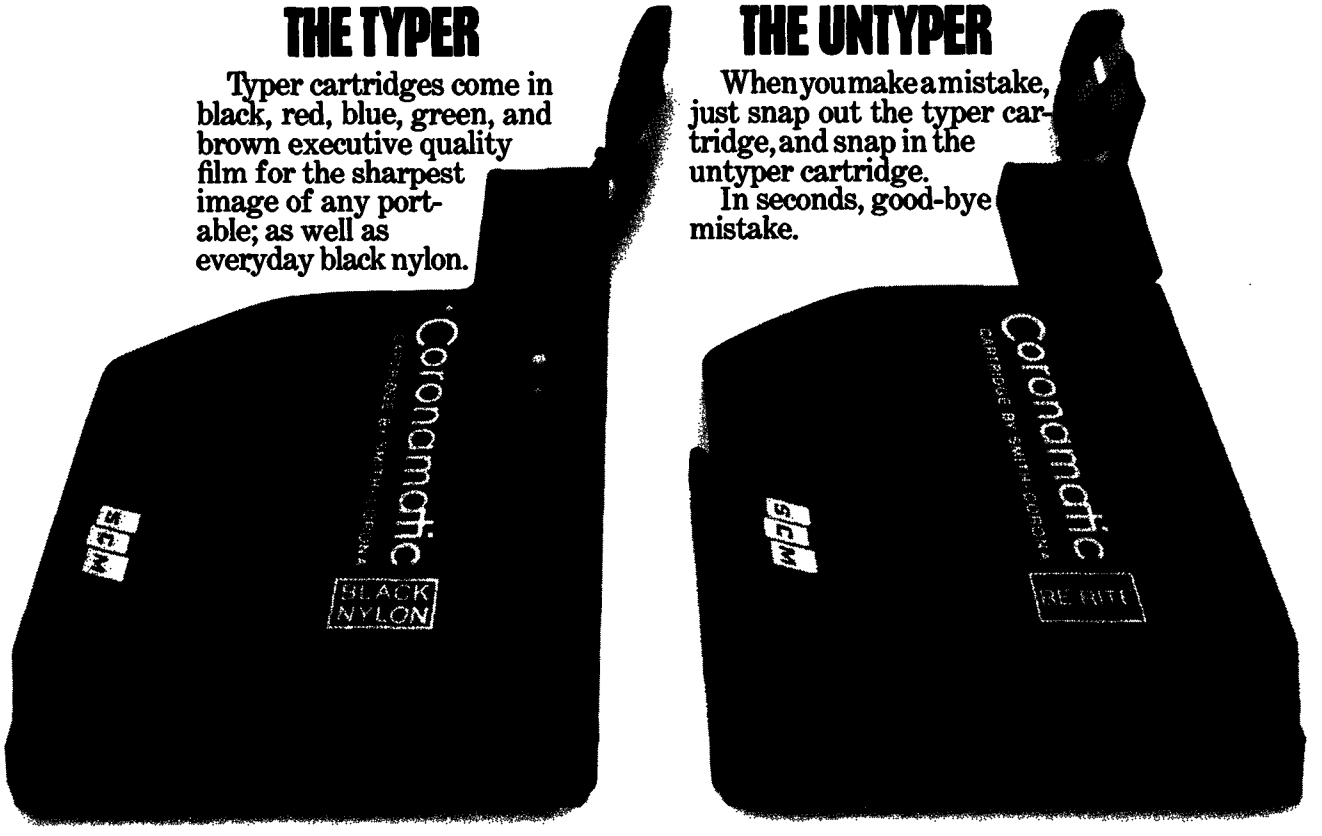

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Europe: The Specter of Finlandization

Walter Laqueur

THE term "Finlandization"—meaning that process or state of affairs in which, under the cloak of maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union, the sovereignty of a country becomes reduced—has entered the political dictionary despite the protests of Helsinki, Helsinki's Western well-wishers, the Russians, and some American neo-isolationists. There is an element of injustice whenever geographical terms acquire a political meaning—not everything in Byzantium was Byzantine, not everything in the Levant was Levantine, not everyone in Shanghai is shanghaied, and if the Balkans were balkanized, it was largely the fault of outside powers. "Finlandization," in any case, is here to stay: it has become the subject of articles, books, and even doctoral dissertations.

Though the term is of recent date, its origins are by no means certain. The phenomenon was allegedly first described in 1953 by the Austrian Foreign Minister Karl Gruber, warning his government not to follow the Finnish example. He did not, however, actually coin the term. Professor Richard Lowenthal said in a 1974 interview with *Time* magazine that he may have been the first to use the term sometime in 1966, when the Warsaw Pact countries, at their meeting in Bucharest, suggested the dissolution of all military blocs. Subsequently, the term was used by Pierre Hassner, myself, and many other writers.

To speak of Finlandization is, of course, considered highly offensive and detrimental to national prestige in Finland itself. But outside observers too have warned against the use of the term. Some have argued that it conveys a false picture of Finland's real situation. Others have maintained that Finland is a unique case, and to apply the term to other countries is misleading. Still others have claimed that the process of Finlandization is not something to be decried but is rather a positive phenomenon, worthy of emulation. And lastly, a few optimists have expressed the belief that Western Europe, at all events, so far has little to fear from Finlandization, certainly less than do Russia's East European satellites.

Coming to grips with the phenomenon of Finlandization is made all the more difficult by the circumstance that so little is known in the West about Finland itself, and hence about exactly what sort of example it offers to other nations. There is no systematic press coverage from Helsinki and the existing scholarly literature in languages other than Finnish is not extensive; it is also not altogether reliable, because the self-censorship practiced inside Finland has infected Western publications on that country.*

FINLAND, which gained independence in 1917, was attacked by the Soviet Union in 1939 and defeated after stubborn resistance. It had to cede part of its territory. To regain what it had lost, Finland joined Germany in the attack on Russia in June 1941; in 1944 it made a separate peace with the Soviet Union and turned against the German army.

Stalin could have annexed Finland in 1944-45, but he preferred not to do so. There were several possible reasons for this magnanimity. The war, after all, had not yet ended, and the annexation of Finland at this date would have precipitated a conflict with the West. Strategically, moreover, Finland was less important than other territories annexed by the Russians. Then, too, the Russians had a healthy respect for the Finns, who had stubbornly fought for their freedom for a long time and who would have been more difficult to digest than, for instance, the Latvians and the Estonians. Nor is it unthinkable that Stalin wanted to keep Finland as a showcase for Russia's benevolent intentions toward the rest of the world.

Whatever the reason, Finland did not become a Soviet republic. But a price had to be paid, and continues to be paid to this very day.

WALTER LAQUEUR, whose many books include *Terrorism*, *The Rebirth of Europe*, and *The Middle East in World Politics*, is chairman of the Research Council of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington and a contributing editor of COMMENTARY.

* Finland's situation has been analyzed and described with remarkable candor in a recent book by a young Finnish author, Peter Kankkonen, *Suomettuva Suomi: Raportii rappion politikasta* (Finland Finlandized: A Report on the Politics of Decadence), Helsinki, 1976. This study is more outspoken than almost any Western work, with the exception of Kils Orvik's book, *Sicherheit auf Finnisch* (Security, Finnish-style), and George Maule's recent *The Finnish Dilemma*, London, 1976.

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What is that price? Finland, first of all, is a neutral country, but not vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, toward which it has special obligations. It must not oppose any major Soviet foreign-policy initiative or enter into any commitments without Soviet approval, and it is expected to give active support to some aspects of Soviet foreign policy.

Secondly, Finland is permitted to have an army, but only within the limits set by the Soviet Union.

Thirdly, only those political parties approved by the Soviet Union can participate in the government, and the same applies *a fortiori* to the president and prime minister. There is no censorship by the Soviets, but the Finns are supposed to exert self-censorship. Communist participation in the government is not absolutely required, but Finnish statesmen are informally required to make frequent declarations stressing their friendly and mutually beneficial relations with the Soviet Union.

Fourthly, Finland is expected to have close commercial relations with the Communist bloc, but in this respect there are no hard and fast rules, and pressure has been more sporadic than in other fields—perhaps in view of Finland's limited importance as a trading partner and COMECON's limited capacity for supplying consumer goods.

Lastly, it is part of the whole process to deny its very existence. Only ignorant or malicious foreign observers, the Finns are expected to say, would find anything ominous or even out of the ordinary in Finland's relations with the Soviet Union.

TO BEGIN with the issue of neutrality, this is perhaps the least important aspect of the Finnish predicament (although it has been discussed endlessly). According to the Soviet-Finnish Treaty of 1948 and subsequent agreements, Finland has certain definitive commitments to the Soviet Union. It is true that Finnish spokesmen, such as Max Jakobson, have argued that the treaty does not bind Finland to anything beyond the defense of its own territory. Unfortunately, this interpretation has not been accepted by the Russians—Mr. Jakobson's book on the subject was bitterly attacked in the Soviet press—and given the facts of political and military power, it is the Soviet interpretation that counts. (When Mr. Jakobson was a candidate for the post of Secretary General of the UN some years ago, the Soviet Union vetoed his appointment; that he is of Jewish origin probably did not help, but the decisive consideration was no doubt that he was not thought to be politically "safe." That is, he was suspected of taking neutrality seriously.) The frequent claims of Finland's President Kekkonen that "all great powers have explicitly recognized Finnish neutrality" are a statement of intent, not of fact.

What is more significant than neutrality is the issue of freedom, which is of immediate practical relevance to the political, social, and cultural life of the Finnish people. Compared with Russia's East European satellites, Finland is both independent and free. It has many political parties (ten), and many (too many) elections. Its institutions are democratic, its constitution is scrupulously observed. There are no arbitrary arrests; in fact, no one ever has been sent to prison for political reasons. Finns can freely travel abroad. The larger part of the Finnish economy is not nationalized. There is a vigorous cultural life, and Soviet influence on it is certainly not overwhelming. Foreign books and newspapers are widely available. Finland, in short, enjoys the same freedoms as the Western nations.

But there is another side to the picture, less visible but always present, which is a consequence of the Kekkonen "line" that Finland's survival can be assured only by maintaining Soviet trust. To provide but a few examples: when the United Nations voted for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary after the Soviet invasion in 1956, the Finnish government did not join the majority but insisted that it was up to the governments of the Soviet Union and Hungary to reach an agreement. When Kekkonen visited Prague one year after the Soviet invasion of 1968, he admonished his hosts to behave in such a way as not to give rise to conflicts. Foreign Minister Leskinen, speaking in 1971, said that the handling of the Czechoslovak crisis by the Warsaw Pact and by NATO was a "triumph of European understanding." And so forth.

If Soviet confidence could be retained at the price of foreign political concessions alone, the cost for Finland might be bearable; it would be understandable, in any case, in view of Finland's geographical position. But according to the Kekkonen line, it is also imperative that Finnish political leaders, parties, the media, and individual citizens all behave "responsibly"; otherwise they will endanger the very survival of the country. To act "responsibly" means to refrain from doing *anything* the Russians may not like, and this involves not only self-censorship but also the need to anticipate Soviet wishes, and even a willingness to accept a Soviet veto if self-censorship breaks down.*

The existence of a Soviet veto is denied quite brazenly in the face of the truth by proponents of the Kekkonen line. But there have, in fact, been quite a number of Soviet vetoes during the last two decades; if they have become fewer in recent years, it is precisely because of the Finnish government's willingness to refrain from actions that might provoke one. The most blatant cases of Soviet intervention occurred in 1958, when the Soviet Union demanded the resignation of the

* See Carl-Gustaf Lilius, "Self-Censorship in Finland," *Index on Censorship*, Spring 1975.

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Social Democratic Fagerholm government, and in 1961, when it threatened to invoke the 1948 treaty unless Kekkonen were reelected president. Seen in retrospect, Finnish compliance with Soviet wishes in 1958 was quite unnecessary, but it legitimized Soviet interference in Finnish domestic affairs (as distinct from foreign and defense policy) and made it that much harder to resist further such pressures in the future.

Other Soviet interventions have been less dramatic than these, principally because these had served to establish the rules of the game. Thus, although a Finnish president or prime minister or member of the cabinet is democratically elected, he also has to be "approved" by the Soviet embassy in Helsinki or the appropriate institution in Moscow. Parties and personalities who have not been approved may be represented in parliament, but they must not be in a position of influence or decision-making. After the 1958 crisis, the Finnish Social Democrats—the biggest party in the country—became eligible to serve in the government only after their old leadership had resigned and the younger leaders had wholeheartedly embraced the Kekkonen line.

Despite the self-censorship exerted by Finnish political leaders and the media, however, Soviet complaints about Finnish transgressions continue almost without interruption. These complaints are reinforced by warnings on the part of Kekkonen and his supporters, such as Kalevi Sorsa, the leader of the Social Democratic party. But Soviet blame has also been mixed with praise—for example, for those Finnish leaders who have supported Soviet foreign-policy initiatives like the appeal for the neutralization of Norway, which, if successful, would clearly be against Finland's best interests.

Typical of the official policy of "confidence-building" are Kekkonen's frequent speeches and statements, published in Russian and English every few years, whose tenor is that Soviet-Finnish relations are excellent and are getting better all the time. Upon receipt of the Lenin prize, Kekkonen—who is not a Marxist or even a man of the Left—praised Lenin for his great role in granting Finland independence. At the time of the Communist youth festival in Helsinki, he expressed admiration for the enthusiasm with which the Finnish national anthem was sung. On another occasion, he claimed that the anxiety of the Russians in the face of the West was real "because I have read in the history of Russia that she has been attacked fourteen times in the last 150 years and that Minsk, the capital of White Russia, has been in enemy hands 101 times" (this is sheer fantasy).

It has been argued by Kekkonen's supporters that such abject statements should not be taken too seriously. If certain declarations, made to preserve Finland's freedom, happen to be untrue, they have after all worked. Who would have benefited if, as the result of acting according to their conscience, the Finns had lost their freedom? Having convinced the Russians that the present Finnish leadership can be trusted, Finland has received special dispensation to be an associate member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and to sign an agreement with the EEC. Even Kekkonen's policy of bringing Communists into the government, his supporters maintain, has not had fatal consequences; on the contrary, the Communist party split, and the more liberal wing denounced the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in no uncertain terms—very much in contrast to the Finnish government itself. And when a Soviet ambassador too blatantly supported the Stalinist faction of the Communist party, he was withdrawn following Finnish representations to Moscow.

One could cite other instances showing that the Finns have been adept in handling the Russians. But with all its apparent achievements, the Kekkonen line has undermined the Finns' willingness to resist Soviet encroachments on their sovereignty. For even if only half of the wonderful things said about the Soviet political and social system in Kekkonen's speeches were true, it would be difficult to explain to a younger generation of Finns why they should still try to keep their distance and not become part of the Soviet Union, that "great federation of free people," as their Karelian brothers have already done. Finnish *sisu* (roughly translated as guts) has been frequently praised by outside observers, but the constant repetition of a basically fraudulent official ideology is bound to have its effect. As Carl-Gustaf Lilius has written: "In the prevailing atmosphere it becomes easy for hypocrisy and apathy to spread, with the pretense that everything is as it should be. And a mentality of this kind entails a measure of corruption, detrimental to the spirit of national self-assertion."

Throughout history, small countries have had to accommodate their policies to the wishes, interests, and whims of their more powerful neighbors. The attitude of small nations has traditionally ranged from refraining from provoking the great power nearby to paying tribute and actively appeasing it in every possible way. As for the great powers, they have routinely interfered in the domestic affairs of their weaker neighbors, picked their own candidates for leaders, and ostracized those whom they did not trust. As Edward N. Luttwak has recently shown in *The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire,* the rulers of eastern client states did not actually have to *see* Roman legions marching toward their cities in order to respond to Rome's commands, for they could imagine what the consequences of disobedience would be. Nor is self-censorship an unprecedented phenomenon. It had to be practiced, for instance, in the countries defeated by Napoleon, and in Switzerland and Sweden after

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the outbreak of World War II, when newspapers were called upon by the authorities to behave "responsibly" in writing about Nazi Germany in terms virtually identical to those used in recent years by President Kekkonen in relation to the Soviet Union.

Given Finland's geographical location and its small size (it has fewer than five million inhabitants), it is obvious that to survive as an independent nation, it has to take Soviet foreign-policy interests into account and has to act with great circumspection: "So far from NATO, so near the Soviet Union," to alter a famous saying of a Mexican president. Finland has had to be silent when other, more distant nations have been able to speak up without fear. But when all these circumstances have been taken into account, it is still true that it was a fatal mistake to legitimize Soviet interference in Finnish domestic affairs. While it is admirable that so much freedom has been preserved, Finland is not independent in any accepted sense of the term. It *is*, as Soviet leaders have themselves long contended, a country in a category apart, neither satellite nor neutral, a country whose "adaptation" to the dictates and wishes of the Soviet Union has become part of the national fabric.

WHICH brings us back to the debate over Finlandization. George F. Kennan, in his latest book, *The Cloud of Danger,* praises the Finns for what he sees as their composure and firmness in dealing with the Soviet Union, and objects to the common usage of the term "Finlandization" as signifying something humiliating and spineless. Along somewhat similar lines, President Kekkonen, in two different speeches a few years ago, conceded that there was indeed such a thing as Finlandization, but went on to say that it should be seen as a positive phenomenon. The same position has been taken by others: far from being an object of pity, Finland, they contend, has benefited from its "adaptation" by getting the best of both worlds. It has excellent relations, including economic ties, with both West and East; its security is guaranteed as a result of the defense pact with the Soviet Union; and it has done more than its share of working for détente and closer cooperation between the power blocs. Thus Finlandization is not something to be deplored but actually offers a model for other countries that must live with the Soviet Union.

A Washington *Post* columnist, writing in 1972, maintained that Finland was "where most of Europe wanted to be," a country not relying on the presence of foreign troops and having both security and more real freedom than some of the countries now in fear of being Finlandized. On the scholarly level, Professor David Vital, in *The Survival of Small States,* called Finland a paradigm for the future—a solution to the problem facing an isolated minor state pitted against a great military power. Mr. Vital, in contrast to the Washington *Post* columnist, did not have Europe in mind but especially the Middle East, which he saw falling "slowly under the preponderance of a single power—in this case the Soviet Union." In the circumstances, the continued survival of a minor (Middle Eastern) state would depend first and foremost on its ability to maintain "a balance of restraint and pressure between it and the preponderant power in whose sphere of interest it falls, as does Finland." While Mr. Vital did not specify what minor state he had in mind, it is unlikely that he meant Libya.

A diametrically opposite view to these has been taken by John P. Vloyantes, an American political scientist and author of a book on Soviet-Finnish relations, *Silk Glove Hegemony* (1975). According to him, it is nonsense to talk about Finlandization, because Finland's situation is unique. Mr. Vloyantes writes that it is "fantastic" to assume that Russian influence could possibly replace American influence in Europe, and he cites as corroboration a "European revival," as well as growing French, Italian, and British political and economic power.

That a strong Europe need not fear Finlandization goes without saying, but how strong is Europe? Time has not dealt kindly with Mr. Vloyantes's evidence of growing European power. It may well be that the Soviet Union would not make specific demands on Western Europe under the threat of force. But there were no Soviet threats of force in 1958 either, when the Finns caved in despite their vaunted fearlessness and strong nerves—which, to put it cautiously, are not found in equal measure in other European countries.

The case of Finland *is* in some respects unique. The country was defeated in World War II; at the end of the war it was clearly within the Soviet sphere of influence; and the West never indicated that it would be able or willing to extend support to Finland in the case of conflict with its eastern neighbor. The other European countries by contrast, either belonged to NATO or had no common border with the Soviet Union. (Austria was an exception, but it was in a more fortunate position inasmuch as the Soviet Union was not the only occupying power—there was also a Western presence.) All this only means, however, that the Finnish analogy, like any analogy, has its limits. But it is certainly not a "myth," as some have claimed.

For when all allowances for the uniqueness of the Finnish case have been made, it is still true that Finland is something of a model and that the Soviet leaders regard it as such. If Poland or Hungary constitute one example of a close relationship between the Soviet Union and its smaller neighbors, Finland provides another. Under certain conditions, this kind of relationship might spread to other parts of the globe.

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Those "certain conditions" are to some extent already visible in Europe. In its present state Europe is weak and disunited, and there are legitimate doubts with regard to its political resolve. Much damage has been done by the centrifugal pressures, the narrow nationalist interests, which have made closer integration impossible, and the domestic difficulties now facing Italy and France may have repercussions affecting the rest of Europe. But above all, there is that mixture of lethargy and hypochondria which has bedeviled the continent for a number of years.

THERE is nothing inevitable or irreversible about the decline of Europe, but at the present time one still searches in vain for a turning of the tide. On the other hand, one does *not* have to look hard for signs of accommodation, of a lack of courage whenever some challenge or threat from the outside has to be faced. The incidents themselves may appear trivial —a Soviet attempt to change the program of the Venice film festival; Soviet expressions of displeasure over the size of the French defense effort; Soviet pressure on Spain not to join NATO; Soviet advice to the Austrians not to modernize their army, and to the Turks not to be so fussy about violations of their air space; Soviet pressure on all European countries not to provide facilities to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty; Soviet efforts to erode the status of West Berlin. But if there is nothing startling or new about these and other Soviet initiatives, what is new is the subtle change in attitude toward them on the part of influential circles in Western Europe, the increased endeavor not to give offense to the Russians.

European reaction to President Carter's early initiative for human rights is an example; while this policy was (and is) quite popular among Europeans in general, some leading newspapers have reacted with extreme concern or anger. President Giscard d'Estaing was the only one to express his disapproval publicly, but other heads of government privately said more or less the same thing. It was not that they opposed human rights, but they feared that their domestic problems might be aggravated as a result of annoying the Russians; more important yet, they seem to have been frightened by the idea of moving off the defensive in the ideological struggle. In these circles it has come to be regarded as legitimate for the Soviet Union to receive foreign Communist leaders and to cooperate with foreign Communist parties, but it is considered bad taste if a Western statesman sees leading Soviet dissidents or expresses support for their activities. By the same token, Soviet broadcasts in Western languages are considered legitimate, but extreme prudence is called for with regard to Western broadcasts in the languages spoken by the peoples of the Soviet Union.

It may be said that while such behavior is not very courageous, it only reflects Europe's diminished place in today's world, and the fact that the policy of accommodation, of adopting a low profile, is applied not just toward the Soviet Union but toward everybody, East and West, North and South. When issues of principle are discussed, the argument always recurs that Britain (or France) is a country whose economic survival depends on foreign trade, and that good customers must be kept happy. Nations that depend on the good will of others have to adjust their policies accordingly.

Such adjustments are undertaken by individuals as well as by whole societies whenever there is a radical change in the balance of power, or when such a change is anticipated. Students of Nazi Germany are familiar with the famous *Gleichschaltung* bandwagon of 1933, when millions of Germans suddenly joined Hitler's party; they were not faced with an ultimatum, nor had they necessarily to fear for their jobs and positions. They simply did it as an act of insurance, just as some Italian newspapers and intellectuals have for the last few years prepared themselves for the "historic compromise" either by joining the Italian Communist party or at least by refraining from criticizing it. They have not even had to be advised, as Finnish journalists were by their president, to behave "responsibly"; they have felt the need to do so in their bones.

It is true that at the present time, *direct* foreign interference in the domestic affairs of any European country would not be tolerated. European political parties and their leaders do not need the stamp of Soviet approval; in this sense Europe has not yet been Finlandized, or even (with the possible exception of Italy) self-Finlandized. Should the present situation become permanent, perhaps some new term will have to be found to define Europe's status in the world—something less than Finlandization, but also something less than the independence it has enjoyed until now. But time does not stand still. If the economic crisis deepens, if nationalism and Communism continue to prevent closer European cooperation, if NATO, shrunk or weakened, no longer offers effective protection, and if the paralysis of political will is not overcome, accommodation seems bound to turn into appeasement, and appeasement to lead to a diminution of sovereignty for which the term "Finlandization" continues, all things considered, to seem appropriate.

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Europe: The Collapse of the Social Democrats

Stephen Haseler

WHATEVER happened to reliable old European social democracy? Only a few years ago it was thought of as the political model of development that would keep Western Europe free, affluent, stable, and forever linked to the United States and the liberal system in general. Yet just before leaving office, that most quintessential of social democrats, Willy Brandt, was reported as believing that "Western Europe has only twenty or thirty more years of democracy left in it; after that it will slide, engineless and rudderless, under the surrounding sea of dictatorship; whether the dictation comes from a politburo or a junta will not make that much difference."

The "surrounding sea of dictatorship" was, no doubt, a none-too-veiled reference to the Soviet Union and its emergence as the dominant military power on the European continent. This awesome presence—together with America's perceived weakened resolve following Vietnam—is, however, only part of the explanation for forebodings like Brandt's. Europe's vulnerability is not only contextual but intrinsic. It is undergoing, of its own volition, and because of its own mistakes, rapid internal political change. The real issue for the continent today is the debilitated nature of its political consensus. And that, for practical purposes, means the debilitated nature of social democracy.

There can be little doubt that the term "social democracy" now describes and commands the political system of Western Europe. Parties which formally call themselves social-democratic govern a majority of the peoples of the Western European continent and they form the largest single unified bloc within the councils of Western European politics. Northern Europe is almost exclusively social-democratic. British Labor and the West German SPD now regularly form governments, either on their own or in coalition. Their opponents in, respectively, the Conservative party and the CDU/CSU carry within their ranks powerful social-democratic factions and show few signs of wanting to push back the frontiers of the social-democratic system should they attain power. Scandinavia and the Low Countries have forged stable social-democratic cultures, and even though the doyen of international social democracy—the Swedish party—now is in opposition, the new conservative coalition governs as if nothing had changed.

In Mediterranean Europe, too, social democracy is the dominant ideology. François Mitterrand, the possible next French prime minister, would describe himself as a "socialist," rather than as a social democrat, but he heads a party which is a member of the predominantly social-democratic Socialist International. In Italy, the non-Communist Left, including the social democrats, is certainly small but is nevertheless pivotal enough to have caused the last Italian general election by its parliamentary maneuvers. Also, on the southern European Right, both Giscard d'Estaing of France and Giulio Andreotti of Italy are social democrats in all but name. Indeed, the Italian Christian Democrats proffer to their electorate and to the West what can only be typified as the "Christian face" of social democracy. Only Jacques Chirac's Gaullists are arguably outside this pan-Western European consensus; yet, their nationalism and distaste for Atlanticism notwithstanding, "social Gaullisme" is more "*etatiste*" than social democracy.

Even in the Iberian peninsula it would appear that few governing politicians are willing to step outside the generalized social-democratic sentiment which governs the continent they aspire to join. In Spain, President Suarez himself, irrespective of his Franquist past, sounds (and certainly looks) like a social democrat; and in Portugal, the major right-wing party actually uses the designation "social democrat" as part of its official label.

To borrow a phrase, we Western Europeans (with the exception of the Communists, the hardliners in the German CSU, and the Italian MSI) "are all social democrats now." If we take the total Atlantic system—including, of course, the United States—as our point of reference, then Western Europe *as a whole* is now its Left-of-Center component. No matter how much European conservatives and Christian Democrats might cavil at the argument, it will only be when their performance matches their rhetoric (about reducing the public sector, about restructuring the welfare system, about restricting trade-union power) that the hegemony of social democracy over the Western European continent will truly be open to question.

STEPHEN HASELER, who was a Labor member of the Greater London Council from 1973 to 1977, is currently visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. He is the author of *The Death of British Democracy* and *Social Democracy: Beyond Revisionism*, among other works.

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Why then should social democrats like Willy Brandt be so worried? Why are they no longer confident that social democracy is the best long-term defense against dictatorship? Is it reallly true, as some are beginning to fear, that social democracy has become a rather pleasant staging-post on the road to a Finlandized Europe?

IT WOULD have seemed eccentric to have raised these questions as recently as five years ago. Up until then, the view of most, if not indeed all, Atlanticist liberals was that the non-Communist Left would rob the extreme Left —that is, the Communists—of popular support among the European working classes and within the trade unions; it would redistribute excesses of wealth and privilege which, if uncorrected, could create instability and lead to revolution; it would —and this was important to the Americans—lay the European empires to rest. And all the time it would remain anti-Soviet and pro-American.

There was much to this thesis. The postwar Attlee Labor government in Britain, with Ernest Bevin firmly ensconced at the Foreign Office, led Western Europe into NATO and instigated an official anti-Soviet and anti-Communist rhetoric that today would be labeled McCarthyite. In France, the various Socialist and Socialist-influenced administrations of the Fourth Republic were loyal partners in the Atlantic alliance and, for the most part, cooperation with the Communists, such as had been tried during the late 30's in the days of the Popular Front, was out of fashion. Although Guy Mollet in 1946 secured the adoption of a program for the SFIO (*Section Français d'International Ouvrière*) that repudiated "reformism and opportunism," this opening to the far Left lasted only one year. Then, after a wave of Communist-inspired strikes against the government, the Socialist Premier Paul Ramadier expelled his Communist ministers. Thereafter, and essentially until Mitterrand, the SFIO fulfilled its Atlantic obligations and adopted a policy of total ostracism of the Communists.

In Italy, the non-Communist Left, in the person of Giuseppe Saragat and later Pietro Nenni, was making life difficult for the fellow-travelers within its ranks by continually splitting on the question of popular frontism; by the early 60's, Nenni, after his long haul back toward the Center, helped to create the Center-Left government. In West Germany, there was, of course, Konrad Adenauer, while his social-democratic adversary, the SPD, was laying the foundations for a repudiation of its Marxist past—a process which was to culminate in the formal overthrow of Marxism in the Bad Godesberg program of 1959.

In the world of ideas in postwar Europe, there was a similar situation, with non-Communist Left intellectuals and pamphleteers taking the lead in denouncing the Soviets abroad and popular frontism at home. George Orwell was increasingly acceptable after many years in the wilderness, and his influence in the 40's and 50's was supplemented by a host of Central and East European social democrats who fled to England and the United States from both red and black fascism. These graduates of exile and the camps—many of whom were social democrats—added a poignant dimension to the gathering anti-totalitarian posture of the intellectuals of the Western Left. So did the return and the entry into politics of the German and Austrian exiles from Nazism: Brandt, Wehner, Ollenhaur, Kreisky, and Pollack.

It is hardly surprising that in this atmosphere social democrats should have been trusted as inviolate defenders of the Western political faith. And to liberal Atlanticists in America, they had one other virtue—they were without the residual suspicion of American culture and power which the conservative European elites continued to harbor in their breasts.

YET WHILE trust was building up, a subtle but real change was taking place in the nature of social democracy. One can sum up the change by saying that the distinction between social democracy and socialism was eroding—so much so that it was becoming difficult to point to the exact differences between social democrats and socialists (or democratic socialists, as they have traditionally called themselves). Thus, for example, Roy Hattersley, a Labor cabinet minister and leading social democrat, recently made the following statement of social-democratic belief:

> We are socialists [*sic*] because we want to see a fundamental change in the structure of society. We are democrats because we have neither the wish nor the inclination to move more quickly toward our goal than the processes of Parliament and the practice of democracy will allow. . . . We want to build a society in which wealth and power are evenly distributed. . . . We too are ideologists—with views as strong and clear about the nature of society as those of the extremists of Right and Left.

Obviously the "fundamental change in the structure of society" that Hattersley refers to can only mean change in a socialist direction. The difference is not in the ultimate destination but rather, as Hattersley himself suggests, in the speed, timing, and method of arrival.

With the exception of the West German SPD (to which we will return later) this melding of social democracy and socialism is by now apparent all over Europe. The two terms are used interchangeably; and no great doctrinal or philosophic differences separate the social-democratic and socialist factions in any of the Left-of-Center parties. This paucity of conflict over fundamentals is reflected most perfectly in the international forum where social democrats and socialists gather—the Socialist International. One looks in vain to this body for any great clash of ideologies between social democrats and socialists. No wonder that Raymond Aron can suggest that the term social

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democracy "designates no definite model of economy or society," and more pointedly that "the distinction between social democracy and socialism has lost all precise significance to the same extent that one of the two terms has kept none at all."

I have always half-suspected that social democracy, even at the time of its greatest vigor, was so eclectic as to possess no meaning in the sense that "liberalism" or "fascism" or "Communism" does (or did). Politically, the early postwar social democrats essentially sided with the liberal order, but they were highly ambivalent about the economic component of that order. Though they certainly acknowledged the superior efficiency of liberal capitalism, the European social-democratic elites remained fixated on its excesses and failings. While embracing capitalism in practice, they concentrated much of their energy on denouncing, guarding against, or correcting its deficiencies. Thus they encouraged those mechanisms (primarily government and union power) which were perceived as insuring full employment and greater equality, and they worried more about problems of distribution than of production.

This emphasis was entirely consistent with the traditional attitude of social democrats toward capitalism. Not a single social-democratic theorist (from the founding father Eduard Bernstein on) has ever positively, and in unqualified terms, embraced the capitalist process as a means or the capitalist system as an end. In fact, if one reviews the debates inside the Left parties of Europe over half a century, one finds that the social democrats have always been on the defensive where capitalism is concerned. They have always had to claim that they are "in favor" of socialism and that it is only the means of achieving it—revolution or gradualism, nationalization or the extension of cooperative ventures—over which they disagree with other socialists. Even Dr. Deist, the architect of the Bad Godesberg program, declared himself a socialist; and at the height of revisionist power within British Labor, the party voted down a resolution to remove from its constitution the ultimate aim of "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange."

In line with all this, it became a standard tactic of the social democrats at European Socialist party conferences to defeat extremist resolutions by declaring them to be laudable as ultimate objectives but impossible to implement for the time being, usually for reasons of electoral strategy. The crucial concession, though—the concession of principle—was always made; and this constant yielding on principle impelled the social democrats ever leftward. They won most of the battles, but each battle was fought on ground further to the Left than the one before. In the end, nothing remained to distinguish the social democrats from the socialists except the name.

Despite the traditional bias against capitalism, this development was not inevitable. Divided as the social democrats were between liberalism and socialism, they might conceivably have moved toward the former, using the gripping fear of the Soviet Union and the mammoth inflow of American capital and culture to bring about the long-delayed modernization of Europe along lines roughly similar to those of the United States. Such a radical break with the European past could have set on course what would have amounted (in all but name) to a new Atlantic cultural and political confederation. Instead, the social-democratic elites went the other way.

Thus, in the electoral arena, the social-democratic theory of class cooperation yielded to the Marxist rhetoric of class conflict. By preying upon the powerful residual class feelings of the European peoples, the social democrats severely hindered the "embourgeoisement" of the European working classes. Although this process of embourgeoisement—a crucial prerequisite for modernization—got under way quite naturally through the spread of affluence, it was never properly completed, except perhaps within West Germany. In England, so persistent were historic class antagonisms that, even with middle-class incomes, the affluent workers still felt themselves different from and set against the rest of society. In Southern Europe, Communist parties maintained their hold on a wide section of the manual working class by regularly stirring up class conflict, and both social democrats and socialists, in order to get some share of this vote, fell in with the prevailing trends. Anti-clericalism also played its part here, and the non-Communist Left, along with the Communists, were not averse to whipping up sentiment in this particularly sensitive area.

The radical transformation of European society into a genuine "twin pillar" of the West, a pillar built upon liberal, de-feudalized foundations, was thus contained and circumscribed by America's closest allies in Europe. For at bottom the social democrats' fear of "Americanization" proved almost as great as their fear of Finlandization. The arch-priest of Anglo-American cooperation among social democrats, the late Anthony Crosland, indicated where the problem lay as far back as 1956. Describing the United States as "restless, insecure, aggressive, and acquisitive," he argued that "the inevitable consequences are increased discontent in the lower ranks of society, psychosomatic diseases on a wide scale, and a maladjusted neurosis-prone community. The United States is already in the grip of these ailments, and Britain is showing distinct symptoms of infection." Europe, under social-democratic tutelage, was evidently not to be allowed to go that route. It would move instead toward the socialist alternative.

THIS convergence between social democracy and socialism is the more ominous in view of the growing flirtation between Socialists and Communists. The "Common Program" of the Socialists and the Communists in

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France, although for the moment in abeyance, is a dramatic feature of this new relationship. The present Socialist/Communist split in France seems to have more to do with maneuvering for political power, or other strategic concerns, than it does with issues of principle. Although the extent of nationalization is the excuse for the present rift, both parties are committed to further measures of nationalization—the Communists to a mammoth program, the Socialists to a sizable one. Also, it is instructive that, notwithstanding the new hard line of the French Communist party, Mitterrand continues to proclaim his adherence to the concept of a "United Left," to the pact he signed with the Communists four years ago, and to the promise that the Socialists will, come the election, yield in the second round in those constituencies where Communists run ahead of them in the first.

In Britain, too, there are early signs of the emergence of an informal popular front. The British Communist party is small in numbers, but it is strategically placed in many of the key unions which are directly affiliated with the Labor party. As early as 1973, the Labor Left removed from the party books the proscribed list of organizations—a provision which forbade members of the Labor party from joining Communist-front organizations. In addition, a former chairman of the 80-strong Tribune Group of left-wing Labor MP's, Sidney Bidwell, declared (and happily) only a few weeks ago that he saw little difference between the programs of the Labor party and those of the Communist party. It is not surprising, then, that at this year's Labor Party Conference, held at Brighton, the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist parties were represented—though they are not members of the Socialist International.

In Italy, the Italian Socialists (PSI) have refused to enter a Center-Left government so long as the Christian Democrats remain "unreformed." Yet they still search, probably in vain, for a "socialist alternative" government composed of themselves and the Communists: no resistance to popular frontism here. In Spain, too, there is little animosity on the part of the electorally-powerful Socialists (PSOE) toward Carrillo's Communists. Of course, the PSOE is a peculiar mixture of ultra-Left Marxists and Left socialists, and while in some respects it is more radical at home and more pro-Soviet abroad than the Spanish Communists themselves, it was supported in the election by the West German SPD and other social-democratic parties. Altogether, the PSOE is an intriguing, institutionalized example of the merging of social democracy, democratic socialism, Marxism, and Marxism-Leninism—all these forms of political life are found under its single roof. One thing is certain, though: the PSOE has no principled resistance to popular frontism.

The sheer magnitude of the changed attitude toward Communists within the democratic Left can be measured by recalling Aneurin Bevan's dictum of over twenty-five years ago: "The Communist does not look upon the socialist in a common cause. He looks upon him as a dupe, as a temporary convenience, and as something to be thrust aside ruthlessly when he has served his purpose." Bevan was not even a social democrat; indeed, he spent much of his life attacking social democracy from the Left. Yet today his warning falls on deaf ears among socialists and social democrats alike. (It even has little effect when the Soviet Communist party makes its own aims quite clear: in April 1976, Boris Ponomarev, writing in *Kommunist*, proclaimed that, no matter what the ideological differences between Moscow and the Communist parties of France and Italy, the need in Western Europe was to promote the "joint emergence of Communists and Socialists" under "a platform of united action.")

The equanimity with which the social democrats now greet the rise of Eurocommunism is only one illustration of their changed attitudes. Even more telling is the fact that social-democratic parties and trade unions are willing to extend the concept of "Left unity" to Eastern bloc parties and regimes. It is nowadays quite commonplace for the official representatives of socialist parties to travel on a "party-to-party" basis—to Bucharest, Warsaw, East Berlin, and Moscow. And when they meet with the leaders of regimes that have incarcerated or killed the leaders of their own sister parties, they are often not content to exchange pleasantries, and then to complain politely about internal repression. Instead, many of our modern social democrats go further; they give public support to these murderous regimes. The general-secretary of the British Labor party, for instance, traveled recently to East Germany and said of Erich Honecker that he was "a man proud of the GDR, and with every right to be proud." Jack Jones, head of Britain's largest trade union, went to Moscow and praised Russia's so-called trade unions as "insuring human values," and then to Russified Latvia where he observed that the people there "were running their own affairs very effectively."

This change of attitude toward Communism among European social democrats began to set in with the passing of the first generation of postwar political leaders to whom the subjugation of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union was still fresh in the mind, and to whom the threat of a similar fate for Western Europe was an ever-present reality. By the time this generation of leaders had resigned or died, however, it was clear that NATO had succeeded in warding off the threat and could (thanks to what seemed in the 50's and 60's an eternal American military presence and resolve) continue to do so. The new generation of social-democratic politicians operated in a more secure international system than their predecessors, and, sheltered under the American umbrella, they simply lost their "inordinate fear of Communism."

This process was reinforced by a concurrent loss

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of interest on the part of the social democrats in global politics and international strategy. As the 50's progressed, strategic thinking was increasingly left to the Americans, and the new generation of social democrats concentrated instead on questions of domestic economic management and social reform. Thus, Anthony Crosland's book *The Future of Socialism*, published in 1956 and the most celbrated social-democratic treatise of the age, completely ignored the international scene: "defense" and "NATO" were not even listed in the index and there was no reference to the problem of Communism in international affairs or the relationship among Communism, socialism, and social democracy.

Indeed, so concerned were the social-democratic reformers with internal problems and injustices, and so great was their concentration on these problems and injustices, that the defense (whether intellectual or military) of their own societies began to assume a rather low priority. One consequence was that social democrats all over Western Europe took the lead in bidding down defense budgets. Of course, sheer political opportunism played its part here as well. Thanks in part to social-democratic promises, expectations were aroused among the electorates (in education, housing, welfare); and thanks in part to social-democratic economic policies, which helped erode the production base, these promises could not properly be realized. Hence the attack on spending for defense became irresistible; and the new attitude toward Communism made the irresistible seem less irresponsible.

YET in the face of all the evidence of the opening to, and toleration of, totalitarianism by European social democrats, there have appeared some signs of hope. Although Marxist notions and assumptions are deeply entrenched in the universities of Western Europe (and increasingly omnipresent in the publishing industry), Marxist theory and practice, aided by the growth of mass Communist parties, are now so out in the open that they can be challenged effectively. In France, there is the powerful voice of Jean-François Revel, and there is also the group of young writers known as the "New Philosophers." Led by a twenty-seven-year-old former Maoist, Bernard-Henri Levi, this group of thinkers has been developing the shocking notion that the roots of Stalinist totalitarianism lie in Marxism itself: Levi is even reported as saying that "the Soviet Union *is* a socialist country," not a "deformed" or "corrupted" variant. In Britain, Paul Johnson (former editor of the socialist *New Statesman*, and now a former member of the Labor party after his recent resignation) has been arousing great interest with his polemical writings in defense of liberal values against the Marxist Left. In an article explaining why he was resigning from the Labor party after a lifetime of commitment to it, he said: "I have come to appreciate, perhaps for the first time in my life, the overwhelming strength of my attachment to the liberal spirit. The paramount need to keep it alive, I now see, is so great as to override any other principle whatever."

On the organized political level, too, there are some tentative signs that the slide to the Left may have been halted. It is just possible that the "historic compromise" in Italy can be delayed indefinitely, that the split on the Left in France will deepen, that Prime Minister Callaghan in Britain can tame his left wing for a few more years, and that Iberian politics will stay on an even keel. If all, or most, of these separate developments should materialize, the future of Western Europe would look very different from today's dismal prospect.

Much will depend upon the SPD in West Germany, for so long considered the bastion of responsible social democracy. Certainly Helmut Schmidt and Willy Brandt are more pro-Western than many of their colleagues in the Socialist International, and they did intervene in Portugal to help Soares save the country from Stalinism while the United States, incapacitated, watched from the sidelines. Even so, the SPD is not immune from developments in the rest of Western Europe. Its ultra-Marxist youth group, the "*jusos*," is on record as favoring a united front with the West German Communist party, and though the SPD leadership is embarrassed by the *jusos*, it apparently lacks the strength to cut them adrift.

The SPD's supposed hard-line foreign-policy stance can also be wobbly at times. SPD leaders seem rather more intimidated by the power of their Eastern neighbors than do their political opponents in the CDU/CSU. This may help to explain the distinct edginess of the Schmidt government during Carter's initial burst of enthusiasm for human rights. For there is a strain of strategic thinking within the SPD establishment which argues that American resolve in Western Europe is not inviolate and that the West Germans had therefore better settle for the best deal they can get with the Soviets.

In fact, the SPD has that eerie sense about it of being at the stage of British Labor when Wilson took over from Gaitskell, and the progressive erosion of the differences between social democracy and socialism set in. Although the West German economy may save it, the SPD's eclectic philosophical base, its nascent electoral opportunism, and, most important of all, its fear of the Soviets all conspire to raise questions about its future resistance to a leftward drift.

With a question mark over the future of the SPD, there is little else within the Western European social-democratic mosaic to which those on both sides of the Atlantic who do not want a Finlandized settlement in Europe can look for hope. We may have to face the sad fact that, taken as a whole, European social democracy has turned from a firm friend of liberty and the West into, at best, a neutral in the continuing struggle between liberalism and Communism, West and East.

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Israel's Dilemma

Shlomo Avineri

THE problems facing Israel's policy-makers have not changed with the coming into power of the Likud-led government, and they will remain the same whether or not a Geneva peace conference is convened within the next months. In trying to formulate policy toward its Arab neighbors, Israel is faced, just as it has always been since 1948, with two sets of factors, which for simplicity's sake may be labeled the constants and the variables; it is the agonizing choice between these two which has bedeviled Israeli foreign policy for almost thirty years.

The first set of factors, the constants in the situation, may be summed up simply as the basic unwillingness of the Arab countries to accept the legitimate existence of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state. In the political philosophy of modern Arab nationalism, there is no place in the Middle East (which, incidentally, the Arabs call "the Arab region") for a body politic which is not Arab-Muslim in its basic political structure; no Kurdish, or Maronite, or Jewish commonwealth can be fitted into this exclusivist and hegemonial philosophy of Arab nationalism.

The Arab unwillingness to accept Israel's legitimacy has not undergone any change since 1948. It may be expressed in more strident or less strident terms—there has, for instance, certainly been a change in the tonality of Arab expressions since the days of Nasser to the present, and even Yasir Arafat speaks a language different from that of the old Mufti of Jerusalem—but even those Israelis who (like myself) have looked high and low for the merest glimpse of Arab willingness to accept Israel's legitimacy have been thoroughly disappointed. President Sadat of Egypt may admit that Israel "is, of course, a fact"—but never has he ventured to assert, either publicly or privately, that Israel is a *legitimate* fact. In the Arab political mind, the fight against Zionism (the ideological justification of Israel's existence) equals the fight against imperialism, colonialism, and racism, and the Arab insistence on coupling Zionism with racism is aimed precisely at the delegitimization of the former in world opinion.

SHLOMO AVINERI is a professor of political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the author of *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*. From 1976 to 1977 Mr. Avineri served as director-general of Israel's foreign ministry under the Labor government; he resigned this post upon the formation of the Likud-led government.

Nowhere has Sadat, who is the most moderate, urbane, and sophisticated Arab leader, even said that in return for the *full* acceptance by Israel of his demands for a settlement, he would be ready to accept Israel's legitimacy: this, at best, he would relegate to "future generations." In internal Arab speeches and documents, Israel continues to be likened to a Crusader state—ultimately doomed to disappear. Thus, even if Israel withdrew to the pre-1967 borders, and a Palestinian state were established on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip, not even then would Egypt be ready to recognize Israel, enter into diplomatic relations with it, or maintain a frontier open to the exchange of goods and people. The Egyptian interpretation of what should be accomplished at Geneva is an Israeli retreat to the 1967 frontiers, with no change in the relationship *across* those new-old frontiers from what was the case prior to 1967 or what is the case today in Sinai. Nowhere and never has any Arab leader, including Sadat, stated that in return for Israeli concessions his country would be willing to embark on a true normalization of relations with Israel, premised on an acceptance of Israel's legitimacy, sovereignty, and independent existence as a nation-state. The best Israel has been offered for total withdrawal is another armed truce.

Yet this, somber as it is, nevertheless represents only one side of the complex relation between the Arab states and Israel. To stop here—at the intransigent Arab refusal to accept Israel's legitimacy as a permanent element in the Middle East—is to be left without an adequate explanation of the fact that *despite* this refusal and this non-acceptance, there have been ups and downs in the level of actual warfare in the area over the past thirty years. Although in that time the Middle East has not known a single moment of full or true peace, there have been periods of relative calm as well as of acute conflagration. Obviously, then, the Arab willingness to go to war against Israel has depended on considerations other than the fundamental factor of non-acceptance.

Any attempt to understand both the conflict and its possible resolution must take into account those variable factors which sometimes goad the Arab countries into war and sometimes restrain them. For even if the constant factor is for the time being impossible to change, there may be ways of controlling or affecting the variable

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factors which may in turn hold the key to future policy-making in the area.

Consider, in this light, the years between 1957 and 1967, the longest period of relative tranquility between Israel and its Arab neighbors. There is no evidence that in this decade between the Sinai campaign and the Six-Day War any change occurred in the basic Arab unwillingness to accept the state of Israel. It is impossible to find even a single statement by Gamal Abdul Nasser, then president of Egypt, containing any hint that he was prepared to acknowledge the legitimacy of the state of Israel, in any form or under any conditions. At the same time, however, no serious attempt (except for one unsuccessful incident) was made to initiate a war against Israel during that decade. This was, therefore, a period characterized by a delicate combination of Arab non-acceptance of Israel's existence and Arab unwillingness to launch an immediate war.

Then came June 1967, and the balance was suddenly upset. But one should understand what happened: it is not that, in May 1967, Nasser made a sudden decision to destroy the state of Israel, as if a month earlier he had had other aims; rather, the ideological goal, which had all along remained constant and unwavering, suddenly became operational and of overriding importance.

Since 1967 and until the present day, Israel's relationship with the Arabs has not reverted to that complex balance of non-acceptance on the one hand, and unwillingness to translate non-acceptance into warfare on the other, which characterized the years between 1957 and 1967; as a consequence, the decade between 1967 and 1977 has been characterized by acute instability.

What then should be Israel's political objectives? I would say that, lacking the ability to achieve a full-fledged peace—that is, the ability to change the constant factor—*Israel should strive to recreate a balance similar to that which existed during the period between the Sinai campaign and the Six-Day War.* Clearly, the components of such a balance will be different from what they were then, but it is the balance itself that must be maintained. Israel would be gravely remiss if it ignored the constant factor, which is the Arab refusal to recognize its existence, but there is no need to deny that this non-acceptance has been expressed with varying degrees of intensity at different times. If, at present, the final objective of peace cannot be achieved, policy should aim at affecting the components of the system so that those factors which impel the Arabs to immediate war may be reduced in intensity, while those which impel them to accept, even temporarily, a stable situation may be enhanced.

How might such a situation be created? It would depend on a number of major components, which can be listed.

The deterrent power of Israel's military strength. If the Arab states feel they can express their non-acceptance of Israel in an immediate war which they have a good chance of winning, or whose military cost will not be too high for them, then, clearly, their readiness to engage in such a war will increase. On the other hand, should they think their chances of victory in the battlefield are slight, their willingness to risk war will decrease.

This is a central element of traditional Israeli military doctrine, and there is no doubt that it has prevented, and continues to prevent, the Arab states from immediate actualization of their plans for the annihilation of Israel. What it means in practice is that Israel must maintain military supremacy as a preventive measure.

Yet Israel's deterrent power, much as it influences the variable factor, does not have (or at least has not had, up to the present) any effect on the constant factor. Israel's entire military might, both potential and real, put together with all the defeats suffered by the Arabs in their wars with Israel, has not in any way led to Arab acceptance of the existence of the state of Israel. Force alone has not until now brought the Arabs one inch nearer to accepting Israel.

Nevertheless, even though the influence of the deterrent power is limited by and large to the variable factor, its influence there is large indeed, and for that reason alone it is a main and indispensable element in the balance.

Defensible borders. A second component—which is, in a sense, a function of the first—is defensible borders for Israel. One need not go into exact details to see that, for Israel, territorial depth is of decisive significance in reducing Arab readiness to risk war. Whether defensible borders would grant Israel merely a strategic margin or a fully deterrent one, their importance is clear; there is no need to expand on this matter, even though there may be legitimate differences over the scope and range of such borders.

Arab interest in maintaining the status quo. The greater the interest of all or any of the Arab states in maintaining the present situation, even if the present situation does not satisfy their final political aspirations, the less chance there is that they will try to upset it by initiating a war. There are abundant illustrations of this:

1. *The open bridges over the Jordan River.* It would be utterly wrong to suppose that the open-bridges policy can be construed as evidence of Arab acceptance of Israel's existence, or as a real normalization of the relationship between Jordan and Israel; yet at the same time it is clear that the existence of the open bridges strengthens the Jordanian interest in preserving the status quo and influences any Jordanian decision to go to war or not to go to war. This was evident in 1973: if Jordan had joined the war, the bridges would have been closed, the Arabs of the West Bank would have been cut off from the Hashemite Kingdom, the Jordanian economy would have suffered, and Jordan's political system would have been undermined. Though the status quo is not accepted by

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Jordan as a formula for the solution of the overall problem, still a continuation of the status quo is preferable to its non-continuation.

2. *The Suez Canal and the Canal Zone cities.* Here, too, it would be a mistake to regard Egypt's rebuilding of the Canal Zone cities as evidence of a willingness to forgo its final goal regarding Israel. But it is also clear that the resources invested by Egypt in the rebuilding and development of the Canal Zone reduce its readiness and desire for an immediate war. Egypt has a strong interest in maintaining the new status quo which resulted from the second Interim Agreement with Israel—and again, this is so despite the fact that the agreement is not a final settlement.

3. *Syria's involvement in Lebanon.* The deeper Syria's involvement in the Lebanese civil war, the less Syria has been interested in undermining the situation on the Golan Heights. Because of that involvement in Lebanon, Syria has been more willing than in the past to extend the mandate of the UN Disengagement Observer Force—even though, once again, its interest in maintaining the relative stability on the Golan has not induced Syria to change the objectives of its overall policy.

In all these cases, the distinction between the constant and variable factors is clear; there is no evidence of a spillover from the variable factors to the constant factor. From this it may be concluded that Israel should concern itself with the creation of many more grounds for maintaining Arab interest in the status quo. Although neither the open-bridges policy nor the sophisticated and tacit understanding between Israel and Syria during and after the Lebanese war was consciously initiated by Israel, in both cases Israel showed skill in taking advantage of an emergent situation and guiding it toward a stabilizing goal.

TERRITORIES. I have said that the territorial dimension, within the context of defensible borders, is a factor which reduces Arab readiness to risk a war with Israel. It would be missing the mark, however, to ignore the fact that from the point of view of the Arabs there is another aspect to this matter. Moshe Dayan once expressed this aspect trenchantly when he remarked that Israel was wrong to think that Egypt would stand for an Israeli presence on the banks of the Suez Canal for any length of time.

This calls for a brief look at the circumstances that led to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. The fact is that this was the only time since 1948 that the Arabs consciously attacked Israel directly. The 1956 strike in Sinai was launched by Israel when it felt it could no longer bear the pressure of *fedayeen* raids, the blockade of the Gulf of Eilat, and the closure of the Suez Canal. In 1967, Nasser upset the delicate balance I have described above and attempted to achieve large political results by pressure, by violating existing agreements, and by terrorizing the world—in such a way that Israel had no choice but to take up arms. Nasser had incorrectly assessed Israel's power and ability to go to war, he was mistaken in his estimate of Israel's reaction to his aggressive moves, and he miscalculated international reaction to his unilateral abrogation of previous agreements upon which the relative calm in the area had rested since 1957. Because of his miscalculations, Nasser found himself in a war, but not one which he had wanted or planned for, or whose opening moves he had prepared. The results of the war, for Nasser and for the other Arab countries which became involved, only proved the point.

The Yom Kippur War was an entirely different affair. In this case, the Arabs undertook a war which they planned, which they wanted, and for which they had trained their armies and carefully coordinated their military, political, and economic moves. It broke out on the day, hour, and moment decided by them, and the opening moves were carried out according to their plan. This had not been the case in 1967, and certainly not in 1956.

What, then, was the difference between the 1973 war and the wars of 1967 and 1956? Had Israel's deterrent power diminished since 1967? This is doubtful. Can one say that Israel's strategic depth had been reduced? The very opposite is true: its troops were sitting on the banks of the Canal and not at the outskirts of Gaza, on the road to Damascus and not at the foot of the Golan Heights.

One approach to an answer is by means of evidence gathered from the interrogation of prisoners captured by Israel in 1967 and in 1973. In 1967, when captured Egyptian officers were asked what motivated them to go to war against Israel, their responses ran generally along the following lines: "We are fighting to restore the rights of the Palestinians." Or, "The war against Zionism is a continuation of the war against imperialism." In 1973, their responses were more focused and less abstract: "You are occupying Egyptian territory." "We went to war to liberate parts of our homeland." "As long as the Israeli flag flies over Egyptian territory, we are not free men."

The difference between Nasser, who got caught in a war, and Sadat, who initiated one, is not that Nasser's attitude to Israel was more moderate, and Sadat's more extreme. The opposite is true, at least with regard to public statements. For Nasser, however, the motivation to undertake an *immediate* war existed on an abstract level ("rights of the Palestinians," "Zionist imperialism"), whereas for Sadat, the issue was far more specific and concrete: Israeli control of Egyptian territory and the blocking of the Canal.

One should be aware of these points not because they justify, or fail to justify, Arab territorial claims, but because the territorial dimension is likely to be most problematic for Israel when hard political decisions have to be made. On the one hand, territorial extension certainly gives Israel strategic depth and additional security; but on the other hand, long-term Israeli control of all

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the territories is likely to stimulate Arab willingness to embark on an immediate war. Neither of these two conditions in itself constitutes absolute truth; Israel will have to navigate between them. Yet to ignore either of them would be dangerous.

Palestinian pressure on the Arab states. Whatever view one holds of the Palestinian question, it is clear that PLO terrorism, and the threat which the Palestinian organizations hold over the Arab countries, is one of the factors liable to incite the Arab states to an immediate war against Israel. Al-Fatah and its activities helped to undermine the status quo in 1967, and helped to push Nasser into his immediate confrontation with Israel. Similarly, when Sadat was negotiating with Israel for the second Interim Agreement in Sinai, he was under considerable heat from the Palestinians for entering into talks with Israel outside the context of the Palestinian question, as well as for moving toward an agreement which left the greater part of the Sinai in Israel's hands. It is reasonable to assume that had it not been for this Palestinian pressure, Sadat might have been able to make an even greater territorial compromise in Sinai within the framework of the Interim Agreement, or that he would have been ready for a *politically* more far-reaching agreement than that which was finally signed.

Any weakening of the Palestinian element, such as with the PLO's loss of military and political strength in Lebanon, is likely to reduce the Palestinian ability to undermine agreements or to threaten the whole system. Any lessening of Palestinian pressure on the Arab countries is likely to decrease the readiness of the Arabs to risk immediate war.

The political price in the international arena. There is no doubt that an additional factor influencing the readiness of the Arabs to undertake an immediate war with Israel is the price they are likely to pay for such a war in their foreign relations with the great powers, particularly with the United States (since Soviet support is guaranteed to them in any case). If Egypt, for instance, thinks that it can attack Israel without upsetting its relationship with the United States, then the possibility of its taking this course of action is greater; and vice versa. For Israel, this makes it all the more important to coordinate strategy with the United States. Any weakening of Israel-U.S. ties is likely to increase the danger of war by reducing, for the Arabs, the political cost of an attack on Israel—for this reason the Arab states are anxious to drive a wedge between Israel and the United States; conversely, if Israel-U.S. ties are marked by a basic understanding about political moves in the Middle East, the chances of war are likely to be reduced.

I HAVE attempted to offer a number of considerations that are likely to influence the readiness of the Arab states to engage in an immediate war with Israel. Two cautions should be entered at this point: first, no one of these considerations should be seen as exclusive, or dominant; at different periods and under different circumstances, there are shifts in the weight of the various elements involved. Secondly, although some of these considerations are mutually complementary, others may be mutually contradictory.

The dilemma facing Israel is reflected in both the "hawkish" and "dovish" positions regarding the future boundaries of Israel; each of these positions has an element of truth in it, but only partial truth. The hawks are right to maintain that since no Arab country has yet accepted Israel's legitimacy, since Israel may well be attacked again, and since strategic depth is of prime importance, for Israel to withdraw from the territories acquired in 1967 would be, under such circumstances, extremely perilous: imagine the Yom Kippur War starting not at the Suez Canal but somewhere around the Gaza Strip. The doves are right to suggest that it was precisely the retention of Arab territories which triggered the Yom Kippur War itself, and that so long as Israel *appears* to the Arabs to be interested primarily in those territories, the danger of another war is very great indeed. But then the hawks overlook the fact that the retention of the bulk of the occupied territories, while giving Israel strategic depth, also increases Arab willingness to go to war in the short range, while the doves appear to be oblivious to the fact that even if Israel went back to the 1967 boundaries, the Arab countries would still not accept its legitimacy.

The truth lies neither with the hawks nor with the doves, but with the owls. These in the future will be required to strike a balance between the constant factor and the variable factors in such a way that even if a full and real peace is not achievable, Israel's security can be maintained while the Arab countries are enabled to lower their immediate hostility to Israel.

If a historical parallel may be permitted, the post-World War II situation in Europe offers a model of a system of checks and balances, based on partial agreements, which may have a greater chance of success in the Middle East than a drive for an overall solution which, precisely because it means to solve everything, may be unable to bridge the presently unbridgeable. If, therefore, the attempt to convene a Geneva conference now is not immediately successful, the alternative need not be a breakdown in the whole process of peacemaking in the Middle East, but a reversion to the much less ambitious but much more realistic attempt at a partial solution. While not resolving the overall problem of peace and war in the Middle East, such an attempt may nonetheless have a chance of minimizing the danger of immediate war and of laying the foundation for a comprehensive settlement in years to come.

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Vanity, Fame, Love, and Robert Frost

Donald Hall

WHEN I grew up—in the suburbs, at suburban schools—I heard adults mention one living poet, and only one. Professors might prefer Eliot; young poets might imitate Auden—but for the American public Robert Frost was the Great Living Poet. His *Complete Poems,* like Longfellow's the century before, were wedged among popular novels on affluent bookshelves. Everyone knew him, and everyone loved him. With the aid of *Life,* we recognized Frost's character: rustic, witty, avuncular, *benign.* Now, a decade and a half after his death, his reputation has changed totally, and a consensus agrees that the old commonplaces were fraudulent. Reviewing a biography in the New York *Times Book Review,* an outraged critic confirms that "Frost was a liar . . . Frost was cold. . . ." The same culture that applauded Frost as a simple farmer now reviles him as a simple monster. But he was not simple.

He was vain, he was cruel, he was rivalrous with all other men, but he could also be generous and warm—when he could satisfy himself that his motives were dubious. He was a man possessed by guilt, by knowledge that he was "bad," by a craving for love, by the necessity to reject love—and by a desire for fame which no amount of celebrity could satisfy.

I met Frost when I was sixteen; I saw him last a few months before he died. Over the years, he changed for me, from a monument to a public fraud to something more human and complicated than either praise or blame could deal with. When I look back now, with knowledge of the life he lived, I look at old scenes with new eyes.

To him—I learned over the years—his family background seemed precarious, dangerous; and his adult life cursed with tragedy, for which he took responsibility. His father was a sometime drunk, dead at an early age; his mother endured a bad marriage, was widowed young, and failed as a schoolteacher when she returned to her native Massachusetts; yet she was a fond mother, kind to her children—and she wrote poems. Her son felt dangerously close to her, and followed that fondness into devotion to one young woman, Elinor White, whom he courted extravagantly, romantically, and doggedly. Apparently losing her, he considered suicide; at least, he later dropped hints to friends that he had considered suicide. When Elinor and Robert finally married, they settled in Derry, New Hampshire, and lived in poverty, enduring an extraordinary series of family misfortunes: their firstborn child, a son named Elliott, died of cholera infantum at the age of three; in later years, warning or bragging about his "badness," Frost said that the doctor who attended Elliott blamed him for the death, for not having called a doctor sooner. The next child was Lesley, daughter and eldest survivor, celebrator and denouncer of her father. Then there was Irma, mad in middle life and institutionalized; Frost's only sister had been insane, he himself frequently fearful of madness; he blamed himself and his genes for his daughter's insanity. Then came Carol, son, who killed himself at the age of thirty-eight. Youngest was Marjorie, dead after childbirth at twenty-nine.

When I speak of poverty in Derry, I speak of something rural, not so desperate as the poverty of cities. The family lived in natural beauty, among country pleasures. But the Frosts were almost destitute, owning only a few chickens and a garden, nothing else. In the Derry years, only an ego as obdurate as granite could remain firm; for years, without encouragement from editors or critics, Frost worked at writing his poems—*instead* of weeding vegetables or tending his chickens or teaching school to support his family.

Finally he took a job at a school, and gathered thereby a small income. Then he sold the farm, and with the capital took off with his family for England until the money ran out. There, by a stroke of luck, he found a publisher—and began the journey to fame. But by the time he returned to the United States—to find magazines at last open to his poems, universities ready to hire him—he was almost forty years old, and his children nearly grown up. In retrospect, he realized that they had grown up insecure, anxious, poor. In retrospect, it seemed to him that out of selfish ambition he had starved and mistreated his family,

DONALD HALL is a poet and the author of, among other books, *String too Short to be Saved* and *Dock Ellis in the Country of Baseball.* He is also an editor of several anthologies of poetry. The present essay will appear in his forthcoming book, *Remembering Poets,* which Harper & Row will publish in the spring.

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that from his family's suffering came madness, suicide, and early death.

His family agreed with him. A thousand stories affirm that Elinor Frost never wholly forgave him the deprivation suffered. He asked her forgiveness as she lay dying, and she would not grant it. Shortly after her mother's death, Lesley told him in bitterness that he should never have married; at the very least, he should never have had children. Frost felt guilty every minute he lived, and sought forgiveness everywhere, and accepted none of it. "When I am too full of joy," he told another poet, "I think how little good my health did anyone near me." He knew he was a bad man. Writing to a close friend, he said he "wondered about my past whether it had not been too cruel to those I dragged with me. . . ." And this was before he watched his son slide into suicide—watched, and argued with Carol, argued with his own son not to kill himself, and lost. Of course he found reason to blame himself for the suicide, as he did for everything else. In his guilt, his ego showed its old omnipotence, but he felt true anguish also, nearly to the point of madness. And when he thought he was dying in Florida, in 1962, he told a friend that in his delirium he saw the vengeful face of one of his children, staring at him, finger pointing, "accusing, accusing." He told his friend, with a laugh unpleasant to hear, that the vision had terrified him back into life.

2.

In August of 1945, when I was sixteen, I went to the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference at the old wooden inn outside Middlebury in Vermont. Frost had been connected with the Writers' Conference from the beginning, and he was my main reason for going. The year before, I had spent my first year at prep school, and I had met an English teacher who knew Robert Frost *personally*, quoted him in conversation, and told me about Bread Loaf. Aspiring writers could spend two weeks there in the summer, being read and criticized by professionals; there, you could catch a glimpse of Robert Frost.

At fourteen I had decided to become a poet, and I had worked on poems two or three hours a day after school. I collected rejection slips from the *New Yorker* and *Atlantic*, and when I was sixteen I began to publish in little magazines—very little magazines, like *Trails, Matrix*, and *Experiment*. I was exhilarated; surely book publication and undying fame would follow as the night the day. Going to Bread Loaf would accelerate matters.

My teacher's conversation not only made me want to go to Bread Loaf; it restored Robert Frost to me. My mother had read him to me when I was small. Then, just as I began to write poetry myself, when I was thirteen, an eighth-grade teacher praised Frost to our class in terms which forced me to despise him: he was a lovable codger with a heart of gold. Becoming a poet, I knew that poets were dangerous figures despised by ordinary society. For a while I dismissed Robert Frost as a poet that English teachers and parents promoted. Now I read him again, with my new teacher's help, and recovered him. I remember finding the poem "To Earthward," which became my favorite poem that year. I recited it to anyone who would listen. There was one stanza in particular I said for the saying's sake:

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

The *shape* of this single sentence—deployed so artfully over four tight, rhymed lines—delighted me, the rhyme itself satisfying, almost amusing, and the rhythm an eloquent swoop of syntax. I loved especially the way the third line shaped itself like a saucer, a whole clause separating the first and last words, which are themselves another clause.

By the time "To Earthward" finishes, however, it's a harsh journey. It starts, "Love at the lips was touch/As sweet as I could bear," but the poem is about aging, and about losing with age the ability to feel—except the ability to feel pain. Frost ends by saying that he looks for pain in order to feel; and then he says that he looks forward to death—or he almost says it:

When stiff and sore and scarred
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough.
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

I loved the pitch and roll of these sentences, and the rhymes—but I loved also the danger of the lines, the brave approach to forbidden feelings.

I could not name the forbidden feelings at sixteen—but I felt them *there*, and they made the lines honest and powerful. With the help of some friends—and thirty years of aging—I know more about the poem now. When Frost longs for a "weight" to press down on him from above—the way his body pressed his hand down—the weight could be six feet of dirt, and the body still sentient although dead; but the weight could also come from sexual assault, an imagined rape by an Amazon, or by a man, with Frost turned into a woman. A poem that begins "Love at the lips" ends with rape and suicide; because if you long for "strength" to achieve this painful pressure, it must be strength of will to undertake the pain. This Robert Frost—masochistic, androgynous, suicidal—was not my eighth-grade teacher's Frost, nor a Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Frost, nor Frost's Frost either. But it was, in fact, a *real* ambivalent human being; trust the poem not the poet.

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THE first night at Bread Loaf we heard a speech of welcome by the director, Theodore Morrison. All of us gathered in a large lecture hall. I sat next to a row of French doors. As Morrison talked—the history and the purpose of Bread Loaf, what to expect—my eyes wandered over the gathered people, wondering which of these people were writers I knew about. I was keeping my eyes out for Frost, in particular, hoping that he might attend the opening lecture, hoping for a glance at a man who made great poems. Looking casually to my right, through the glass doors, I saw him. He was walking with two friends, Frost a little ahead, his mouth moving humorously as he talked. The ground outside sank away, and Frost, approaching the lecture hall uphill, appeared to be rising out of the ground. His face was strong and blocky, his white hair thick and rough. He looked like granite, some old carved stone like menhirs in Ireland which I saw in the *National Geographic*. But he could walk and speak. Through the window I saw his mouth move with speech, and the faces of his companions broke into laughter.

But I had no mind, at sixteen, for his companions. I had seen the great poet, the maker of "To Earthward" and "After Apple Picking." He was palpable, human, in the flesh. I felt light in head and body. Merely seeing this man, merely laying startled eyes upon him, allowed me to feel enlarged. My dreams for my own life, for my own aging into stone, took reality in the stern flesh of Robert Frost, who rose out of a hill in Vermont.

Frost attended some of the poetry workshops, conducted outdoors by Louis Untermeyer after lunch. When Frost came, we learned to tremble. Whatever poem was up for discussion that day, Frost was liable to be cutting, sarcastic, dismissive. The day when Untermeyer chose to read and discuss my poems was a day Frost didn't come. I was relieved. One day Frost took over the workshop all by himself. He chose a young woman's poem to read aloud, and asked for comments. A few people said a few fatuous things; only the brave or the stupid would lay themselves open to Frost's wit. He dismissed the fatuities with a cast of his forearm. Then he said, "Who *wrote* this poem?," his voice heavy with disgust. The young woman—I remember that she was small, attractive in a Cambridge manner, married to a Harvard graduate student—acknowledged authorship, looking deliberately stalwart. *"No,"* said Frost, "I mean, who *really* wrote it?" There was silence, bewilderment. After a long pause, while Frost held to the sides of the podium with evident anger, and stared at the audience as if he dared anyone to speak, the woman spoke again. "I wrote it," she said, "and I don't know what you're talking about."

"You didn't write it," Frost said, and waved the typed page in the air. "You know who wrote it?" his voice pronounced the name with the heaviest sarcasm he could summon, and he could summon sarcasm as well as anyone: *"T.S. Eliot!"*

That afternoon at the workshop I gulped at Frost's asperity, but I accepted the notion that it was warranted. And it *was* warranted—I will argue, now—if we take poetry more seriously than we take social smoothness. The poem *was* "written by T. S. Eliot," on a bad day; and if anyone imitates another author, and shows it to other poets—well, she gets what's coming to her. If we devote our lives to poetry, and take our lives seriously, we must praise and denounce with equal ferocity. People who follow the notion that praise is requisite—"Boost Don't Knock"—should sell cars. To be a poet, as Frost was wont to say, you've got to have a snout for punishment.

But there was another side to his harshness: if the young woman had imitated Robert Frost instead of T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost would not have been so angry. He would have been scornful, but he would not have been angry. Frost was angry because most of the professionals in the modern poetry business—teachers or critics or reviewers—preferred Eliot over Frost. In his competitive ambition, Frost was outraged. For him—as he liked to say—there was room for only one at the top of the steeple—and he demanded to be the one. He was jealous of all other poets.

And not only of poets.

One day, I sat on the porch talking with him. I sat with a young woman from Bryn Mawr and her mother, both good looking. Frost rocked and spoke laconically yet wittily, proud and strong, delighted to hold this audience. We sat in the breeze, late afternoon, late summer, three of us, waiting for the words he would utter, and I was aware—as at times of love, of triumph, and of catastrophe—of the moment as I lived it. He asked me about my school, and about where I would go to college. Then Frost, who had gone to Lawrence High School and fitfully to Dartmouth and Harvard, disparaged higher education. At the time I felt uncomfortable, and did not know why; he was one-upping me; he could not help but make himself out to be better than any male around him, even if the male was sixteen.

3.

I TALKED with Frost a few times during my four years at Harvard. He lived in Cambridge fall and spring. Around Harvard, Frost was cagey. America's foundation is possibly not so much freedom of religion as freedom of competition; or possibly the religion of competition: Harvard is its Vatican City. The only Americans more competitive than Harvard undergraduates are Harvard faculty members. When I saw Frost at Harvard, it was among undergraduates and faculty, and he kept his elbows close to his sides, and he saw to it that he sat in a corner of the room, with his flanks covered. This was a

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sophisticated Robert Frost, suspicious, combative, happy, blessedly far from the benign farmer, capable of verses, one met in the news magazines. The great competitor appeared to enjoy the schoolyard of competition. If he made a slip it would never be forgotten. He made no slips.

Here sits Robert Frost in a corner, his eyes scanning the room for approaching enemies. Undergraduates ask questions about Yeats, Eliot, Pound. The corpses of Yeats, Eliot, and Pound litter the floor of the housemaster's living room. Someone mentions Robert Lowell's name. Frost says he guesses Lowell is pretty good. Of course he's a *convert,* he says; he lays the word out like a frog in a biology lab. Frost remembers a story. Because he smiles when he remembers it, his audience understands that it is a malicious story. Frost tells us that Allen Tate's a convert too; once he saw Tate at a party standing next to a Jesuit, and he walked over to them; he asked the Jesuit, "Are you a *convert?*" "No," says the Jesuit. "Well, neither am I," says Frost, and walks away. Telling his story he grins, and when he finishes, he laughs a slow long laugh, happy and mean. We laugh also. Tate's and Lowell's bodies join the heap on the carpet.

THREE years after graduation I spent a year at Stanford on a writing fellowship. When I heard that Frost would read his poems there, I was delighted. But the reading was horrid. It took place in a huge auditorium, packed full. Some faculty attended and some students, but most of the audience appeared to be Robert Frost's peculiar audience, who would not have attended a poetry reading by Wallace Stevens or William Carlos Williams, but would have crossed flooded rivers to hear Robert Frost. Many were people who celebrated Frost for what he was not—and for them, he pretended to be what he was not. Finding himself with this audience, he cooed and chuckled, he trotted out his country sayings, and he performed his tricks: speaking one poem, he interrupted himself in the middle, smiled a "mischievous grin" at his audience, and cackled, "Now, *that's* a good line." And Frost put down "the professors," those fancy intellectuals who read all those hidden meanings into a simple old fellow's poems. Everybody laughed, everybody roared in delight. Almost everybody. I felt angry at his betrayal of himself and of poetry; he pretended to be the poet my grade-school teacher had praised. He performed in order to be loved. He played Mortimer Snerd for these people; he played the combination of Edgar Bergen and Mortimer Snerd, making himself his own dummy.

Yet I went to Wallace Stegner's cocktail party afterward. Stegner was an old friend of Frost's from Bread Loaf, and he lived in a modern house fashioned neatly into the dry grass of California hills, great glass panels looking west toward sunsets. In the living room with its low soft furniture, blond wood and glass, Robert Frost sat in a deep chair with a martini in his hand. But this was not the creature of an hour before—kindly and folksy, cuddly and chuckly; this Robert Frost held the stem of his martini glass neatly between thumb and forefinger, drank a few, held his liquor, and denounced other poets. I remember that he spoke of Yvor Winters—who taught at Stanford, and who had written unfavorably of Frost—as "clever," using the word as they use it at Oxford, as permanent dismissal: shallow, callow, meretricious, pretentious.

I had seen two versions of Frost: one a performer who manipulated an audience by lying to it, the other a malicious literary figure attacking his enemies. Neither version seemed connected to the poet who had made great poems. I went home and read "Home Burial" again, that early narrative, better than "The Death of the Hired Man," sensitive to all measure of feeling. The wife has lost a child, and stands always at a special place on the stair, from which she can see his grave. The practical husband says that the living have got to go on living. But the wife finds it irreconcilable that life should simply go on, when her baby has died:

> The nearest friends can go
> With anyone to death, comes so far short
> They might as well not try to go at all.
> No, from the time when one is sick to death,
> One is alone, and he dies more alone.
> Friends make pretense of following to the grave,
> But before one is in it, their minds are turned
> And making the best of their way back to life
> And living people, and things they understand.
> But the world's evil. I won't have grief so
> If I can change it.

Frost was inconsolable, over the losses of death. I think of "Out, Out—" where the boy loses his arm to a saw, and then dies of shock. "And they"—the poem ends, outraged—"Since they were not the one dead, turned to their affairs."

So what was this man *doing*—I asked myself—being a buffoon on the platform, and a literary hit-man at a cocktail party, when he had written such poems?

The question was part silliness. The man on the platform, and the man at the cocktail party, was vain and vulnerable, needed adulation, needed victory; he was a man, not a monument. Because he had written great poems, I demanded greatness at all times and in all matters. "And I am not a demi-god," said Pound in a late Canto. The old poet had created—over decades of work, rejection, suffering, failure, and success—a body of work; not an edifice, not a monument, not an institution. If he is a great poet, then that body is an alternate to his own; it is permanent, and it contains the best of him. The poet in his own skin will never equal his poems.

Still, the question bears asking another way: what purposes did it serve Frost to mount and present—that day at Stanford and on many other

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days—a public character so far from his own? The deception I think served large purposes. The best of his poems represented his feeling with honesty and accuracy—and with terror. Robert Frost lived in terror of madness and suicide. (If a child dies, and you cannot go on—what is it that you plan to do?) When he wrote the poems that told the terror, and that summoned intelligence to control the terror, he must have suffered in the telling. When he retold his poems at poetry readings, or answered questions about them, he lied and lied and lied—in order not to repeat that ordeal over and over again.

There was, I think, another reason as well: the need for love and applause was a need for forgiveness. I will speak of this later.

WHEN I was back at Harvard as a Junior Fellow I helped Robert Pack and Louis Simpson edit *The New Poets of England and America*. I wrote Frost to ask if he would write an introduction for us; I did not think he would. For some months he did not answer. I wrote a second time; still no reply. At the publisher's impatient request, we tried someone else, and a few days later I had a letter from Robert Frost:

September 18, 1956

Dear Don Hall:

There would be no excuse in the world for my not writing you juniors a preface to your poetry unless it were the poor one that I try to keep a rule of not writing prefaces. But rules aren't meant to be kept. They're meant to break on impulse when you have any impulse left in you; before the evil days when fun ceases. So if you will let me see some of the poems to take off from I'm your cheerful victim. I'll be down in Cambridge in a week or two now where I can see you to talk the matter over. I've been hoping to see you anyway.

Mind you I'm roused up to do this con amore and I'm not so lazy that I can't do it.

Ever yours
Robert Frost

I was surprised, and pleased for the book. I sent Frost some poems. I did not see him. Although his letter invited me to pay a visit, I waited for him to telephone, as if he should prove his invitation's sincerity by pursuing me with a lasso. After another wait, the brief and elegant introduction arrived. It was called "Maturity No Object," and did little dances among notions of poetry and growing older. The prose was typical in its eloquent tortuousness, epigram softened by idiom. Frost was concerned that almost all American poets were students or teachers, and in his preface dealt with his doubts by promenading them without calling them doubts. And oh, he could make a sentence; he could make a pun, and turn his heel on it for a transition:

> In fact the poet and scholar have so much in common and live together so naturally that it is easy to make too much of a mystery about where they part company. Their material seems the same—perhaps differs a little in being differently come by and differently held in play. Thoroughness is the danger of the scholar, dredging to the dregs. He works on assignment and self-assignment with some sense of the value of what he is getting when he is getting it He is perhaps too avid of knowledge. The poet's instinct is to shun or shed more knowledge than he can swing or sing. His most available knowledge is acquired unconsciously. Something warns him dogged determination however profound can only result in doggerel. His danger is rhyming trivia. His depth is the lightsome blue depth of the air.

It's the work of an older man. As I read it now, and I come close to fifty, it talks to me more than it used to talk.

Now the book was ready, and I sent the introduction to New York. But I did something else—or I failed to do something else. I did not write Frost to tell him that we had received the introduction, that we admired it, that we were grateful. I was still too young or too cloddish to understand that Frost of all people would be waiting to hear our approval. Really, *anyone* would be waiting—but perhaps especially an artist in his seventies making connections with artists in their twenties. I could not conceive that "Robert Frost" could care for my opinion. I could not grant him that humanity. Institutions do not have feelings, do not need bolstering. In a week or two, an aggrieved Kathleen Morrison, who as Frost's neighbor and friend often served as his go-between to the outside world, telephoned to wonder what was happening. I am sure she had heard certain grumblings.

WHEN Frost wrote the introduction to our anthology, I knew that he served himself. He wanted to stay in touch with the young; although he would be jealous of any of us caught mounting the steeple, he wanted us to like him, to praise him. At the same time, perched where he was, it was generous of him to write for us at all, and he wrote well. Whatever the motives he acknowledged to himself, his motives were complicated; I believe that he could only acknowledge the selfish ones. When caught in the act of virtue, he would proclaim it vice. And about the time he wrote the introduction, he began to involve himself in another act of generosity. Or rather, Archibald MacLeish saw to it that he became involved.

Everyone knows that Ezra Pound was locked up in Washington from 1945 to 1958, as a result of treason charges. Almost everyone knows that Frost had a hand in the release. This magnanimity fit Frost's old reputation for benignity, but does not square with Frost's new, posthumous reputation for nastiness. But Frost's character wore at least three faces. He could appear simple and sweet to the masses, twenty years ago, while in private and to his literary acquaintances he avowed that he

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was selfish and cynical. The third and least obvious Frost was secretly magnanimous, while accusing himself of being a saint for the devil's reasons. To get Frost to do something good, you had to convince him that he could do it for a wicked reason.

Archibald MacLeish was leader of a circle of people who worked to free Ezra Pound. Perhaps MacLeish was the most effective of all the group, because his dédication was accompanied by political sophistication, by friends in Washington and in government. Still, the push to release Pound needed a stronger public force. Only Robert Frost was visible enough and respectable enough to push Congress.

The first and essential move was to persuade Frost to act. Now Frost never *liked* Pound. He owed Pound a debt of gratitude, which may account for initial dislike; they are rarely generous people who can forgive anyone for helping them get started. Pound had nothing to do with Frost's original publication, but as soon as Pound read Frost's poems, he promoted them with Poundian zeal, reviewing them, recommending them, and bullying the American public about this neglected writer. Frost didn't like the bullying part, disliked Pound's ridicule of America for Philistinism, and was fearful that American editors and critics would associate him with Pound's rhetoric. There were obvious disparities between the two men. Frost was older, from New England, quiet, and private. Pound was young, noisy, flamboyant—it was the period when Pound wore trousers fabricated of green billiard-table cloth—and Frost would not have taken to him under any circumstances. Then for forty years Pound was champion of modernism and free verse, while Frost wrote sonnets and took every occasion to ridicule verse without meter. "I'd just as soon play tennis without a net," Frost said one million times. While Pound, in his remarkable detachment, could praise Frost because Frost was excellent, even when Frost's excellence ran contrary to Pound's theories and advocacies—Frost was more like the common run of humanity, and could not forgive the difference.

Finally, Frost was a patriot. Pound considered *himself* a patriot, for that matter, and found it ironic that *he* should be called a traitor. But Frost shared the more conventional opinion that to broadcast for an enemy, in time of war, and to ask American troops to lay down their arms, sounded like giving aid and comfort to an enemy. Frost came from the world of the Republic, when Fourth of July orators denounced the British empire—and all other empires, ignoring our own adventures in Cuba, Panama, and the Philippines—and praised the independence and separation of this continent from the crowned heads of Europe and their wars. When the United States went to war, you *knew* that it was a righteous war, and you knew who would win. When Chinese troops overran the Americans in Korea, in the Yalu Valley, and Marines and regular army made the most massive retreat in American history, Robert Frost wept for three days. When Frost returned from a USIA trip with Faulkner, and Faulkner had been drunk on foreign soil, he denounced Faulkner as "a disgrace to the colors."

So when MacLeish decided to convince Frost to help release Pound from St. Elizabeth's, where he languished rather than stand trial for treason, it appeared a formidable charge. But MacLeish knew his man. I asked MacLeish how he planned to persuade Frost to intervene. Oh, he said, he would just tell Robert that Ezra was getting *too much attention,* locked up down there; if we get him out, people won't notice him so much.

So Frost talked to the Attorney General on a couple of occasions, he called on some legislators, he talked with Sherman Adams, and his opinions were accepted in the newspapers as benign and fair-minded. MacLeish started the campaign, but once he was committed to help, Frost worked hard, making special trips to Washington, trying with his charm to influence the influential. Gradually Washington's attitudes toward Pound altered and the Justice Department was able to release him in 1958. Four years later, when I saw Frost next, I asked him how he had happened to work for Pound's release. He looked cunning, amused, and pleased with himself as he told me that Ezra was getting *too much attention,* being locked up down there; we got him out, now people don't notice him so much.

4.

At the inauguration of President Kennedy, in 1961, Robert Frost read his old and fine poem about the sense of nationhood, "The Gift Outright," altering the tense of one verb, predicting great things by means of the future tense. He knew the poem by heart. Harsh sunlight kept him from reading aloud some chatty lines he had written for the occasion. For the first time in our history, a poet had taken part in an inauguration; and for the first time in our history, tens of millions of Americans heard a great American poet read a poem.

Frost was eighty-six, with only two more years to live. The inauguration changed his life, at the end of it. He became famous, like a President or an athlete. When he flew to Russia, and talked with Nikita Khrushchev, two books were written about that quick trip. When he went off to England for honorary degrees, and returned to his walkways of fifty years before, the return was well photographed and reported on; his life became a series of media events.

He loved it.

I was teaching at Michigan where Frost had been poet in residence briefly in the early 20's. He had

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planned to stay in Ann Arbor back then, but the university president who invited him died, and the new president asked Frost an indelicate question: as I understand it, the new president asked him just exactly what he did around here. This insult gave Frost in his pride an excuse to pack up and return to New England, where he wanted to live anyway.

In 1962, the Student Union wanted Robert Frost to return to Ann Arbor and read his poems. He agreed to come, wanting to return to Ann Arbor on the tour he was making of places crucial to his life, the great goodbyes of an energetic ancient, goodbyes cherished and then repeated, the old man always retaining some confidence that he would, somehow, really be back yet again. The Student Union asked me to introduce him. I agreed, but I was nervous about it, half-expecting him to say something rude about me, maybe one of his lines about professors.

He would read April 2, on Monday night. Student Union officers met him Sunday at the airport, and took him to Inglis House, an elegant estate willed to the university and used as a guest house. Then a small group of us—undergraduate officers of the Student Union and his old Ann Arbor friend, Erich Walter, and I sat around with Frost for an hour, chatting while he drank a 7-Up. Walter talked old Ann Arbor times with him. I told Frost I had seen Pound two years before, and that Pound regretted what the newspapers had quoted him as saying—that Frost had taken long enough, to help him get out of St. Elizabeth's—and Frost said, well, he should regret it.

Then he went on about Pound. He had seen a lot of people *about* Pound, he told us, but he never saw Pound; he didn't want to see him, because of all the crazy things he heard Pound quoted as saying; he didn't want to see him in that shape. Then he told us that he had never really liked Pound anyway, though he had things to be grateful for. In fact, he said, Pound was one of the reasons he moved from Beaconsfield, near London, down to a farm in Gloucester. He left Beaconsfield in order to avoid seeing Pound, at the same time not wanting to offend him; if he had stayed in Beaconsfield, he would have had to refuse invitations all the time. Why did he dislike Pound? He found Pound *affected,* always looking for something new, trying to find what hadn't been done yet and doing it. Then he went on to say that he found Yeats affected too, and didn't like him either. He told how Yeats had once observed to George Russell, "I think we must absolve the stars." And old Robert Frost—sitting in Inglis House surrounded by admirers, eighty-eight years old, in 1962 remembering fifty years back—roused himself to anger over the ancient blarney of William Butler Yeats.

"Bunk!" he roared in his best American. "Bunk!"

Monday, the day of his reading, began with a press conference at eleven. We picked Frost up at Inglis House, and took him to the Regents' Room in the administration building. A man from the university television studio showed Frost a drawing of himself made by a local artist for use in a television series. He signed the picture as requested, but grumbled: he didn't like the picture, it thickened his face and made him look too stolid; also, the artist had swept his hair romantically down over his forehead. "I don't wear my hair that way," he said. "They're trying to make me look like Sandburg." Then he remembered a story to tell on Carl Sandburg, and as he told it, his own malice cheered him up, and his grumpiness vanished. I heard him tell the story twice later in the day, when he found some new faces to tell the story to:

When Frost was in Ann Arbor—the year he lived out on Pontiac—he brought Sandburg to read his poems at the university. Before the reading, Frost, who was living alone, cooked Sandburg a lamb chop. As dinner was ready to serve, Sandburg went upstairs to the bathroom and didn't come downstairs for an hour and a half. Frost was furious, the dinner was ruined. "What were you *doing* there?" he asked Sandburg. "I had to do my hair," Sandburg said, "for the boys." Or that's what Frost *said* Sandburg said.

AT THE press conference, Frost sat at the head of a long table, the television lights bright in his eyes and three cameras cranking. I sat beside him, my job to bellow repetition of questions into his ear, on account of his deafness. Frost was funny and lively, repeating things he had said before, happy, the center of everything. Then he signed some books for people, and we went back to Inglis House for lunch. Now he talked politics. We should have settled the Cuban problem a long time ago, he said, but he didn't tell us how. And he ridiculed welfare, which he had been doing for thirty years. And he told about an argument he had with Justice Black.

Frost had met Black at Frost's eighty-eighth birthday party, just a few days before, and Frost had immediately launched into a hymn of praise for the Supreme Court, one of the greatest institutions the world had ever known—he told us he said—and above partisanship. Black disputed the point, perhaps out of modesty. Frost's praise, Black said, was sentimental; Black avowed that *he* was not removed from partisanship; he was a labor man and he had always been a labor man. As Frost told the story, he became angry; he told us that he told Black the Court should put "patriotism above party."

After lunch someone drove us back to my house. In my living room he signed books for me—"from your old friend Robert Frost with high regard"; "remembering old Bread Loaf days"—and told me stories. Talking about the Kennedys brought up Teddy's cheating on an examination at Harvard. Then he said that he never cheated in school, he

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wouldn't have done such a thing; but his virtue, he hastened to assure me, was the by-product of a vice: he would not cheat because he was proud. He looked at me shrewdly—aware of giving himself away, delightedly giving himself away—and said that when he had gone to Lawrence High School he had been good at Latin; that he would come to school and hide in the bushes until the bell rang, then dash inside.

When he had told me so much he stopped, and watched me to see if I got the point. I did. He hid in the bushes with his Latin homework done by hand and finished. He would take no help on his homework—and he would give none either.

HE WANTED to see some classrooms, he said. We parked and walked through Mason and Angell Halls. Passing one lecture hall, I mentioned that I taught a class in it. "How much do they make you teach?" he asked.

I liked my schedule. I taught the same number of classes as anyone else, but they were jammed together into two afternoons; morning has always been my best time for work. "Tuesday and Thursday afternoons," I said. "One to four."

His face changed; we might have been rivals for team captain, or for a girl, or for a last piece of chicken tetrazzini. Smug and powerful, he said, "They didn't make me teach that much."

HE GREW tired, after half an hour, and I took him back to Inglis House. He asked me what I had written lately, and said he wasn't always sure what people were up to. I told him my latest book was prose, a memoir about my summers on the New Hampshire place where my grandfather farmed. He asked if he could see it; maybe he could read in it before his afternoon nap. After we left him at Inglis House, I went home and picked up a copy and took it back to the housekeeper for him. I was anxious that he like it. It was a book of love for my grandparents, and the other old people of the country, and for the culture they had known when they were young—culture of Lyceum and political debate, fairs, and baseball games that pitted married men against single men, of high schools that required Latin and offered Greek, of two-hour sermons and Christian Endeavor and the Willing Workers Circle of the King's Daughters. It was a book of love for the dead and the dying, and of bitterness over loss.

WHEN we picked him up that night, Frost wanted to know how tickets had gone, and when he discovered that Hill Auditorium was sold out, his pleasure expanded to fill the limousine which the Student Union had rented for the occasion. Four thousand seats; standing room only. His pleasure in a crowd found its counterpart if ever he lacked a crowd. Someone who ran a series of poetry readings in a large city has told me about Frost's "madness of old age"—though I suspect that old age only made manifest what had earlier been lightly disguised. When Frost read in a series, she told me, she could allow no empty seats visible from the platform. If there were empty seats, the old poet would be inconsolable, would rage and fume, would invoke conspiracy and intrigue. In desperation, when she had a small audience for him, she and her assistants dredged additional bodies from offices nearby—free tickets, *please* come, just sit there.

Inside, we walked to a green room behind the stage so that Frost could rest for a moment. He told me he had been reading my book; it was good, he told me, and his eyes took on that amusement which let me know he had a wisecrack. "You talk about the *decay* of New England," he said; of course he wouldn't like that part so much, although he was a poet of deserted villages and abandoned farms. "It's a *compost heap,*" he said.

When I left him backstage, to go out to introduce him, he said, "You know I can't hear you. You can abuse me all you like." Of course it was a joke; of course it expressed that same distrust which *I* felt. When he shuffled on stage, to immense and prolonged applause, I stayed long enough to hook the lavalier microphone around his neck. Then I went backstage, and watched the reading for a while on the television monitors; then I snuck out front and stood against the wall to watch him read for the last time. Bread Loaf, Stanford, Ann Arbor. It was the best of the three. He was triumphant, utterly happy, as he returned to a scene of his struggling middle age. In his triumph, he read with energy and conviction, stopping to make jokes on occasion, but no jokes to humiliate poetry, or the professors who looked for hidden meanings. And I, who had been afraid that he would belittle me, heard him speak of me with affection. He said he wanted to come to Ann Arbor, despite his recent illness, for a number of reasons, and one of them was to see a young poet he had helped to bring up. He left the audience with the impression that he had supervised my writing from the age of sixteen. He referred to me as a son. He started to mention *String too Short to be Saved* but he couldn't remember the title, so he changed the subject. Then he said that New England was in decay, all right; it was a compost heap from which had come five Presidents and Donald Hall and himself, so it wasn't so bad.

After reading for an hour, he looked as tired as he looked pleased, and he slowed himself down and stopped. I climbed onto the stage and undid his microphone. The audience applauded and stood up. He waved me off, and holding the microphone in his hand, said one more poem. Then he followed me from the stage—the audience standing and applauding again, determined to stand and applaud forever—and when we stood in the dark corridor behind the stage, he said, "It's a pity not to let them have more when they are like that. Why don't you go out and ask them if

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they want any more?" There was no stopping him. I told him that the question was unnecessary, that if he felt strong enough he should go out and do another.

After the second encore I led him back to the green room again—exhausted, gray-looking, but his eyes bright with triumph. Ten minutes restored him, and he was ready to return to Inglis House for scrambled eggs and 7-Up. When we opened the green-room door, we found hundreds of students crowded into the backstage corridors, waiting for a sight of the old poet. The white hair behind me drew cheers, and there was movement through the crowd as people pushed to see him. Hands held out copies of books for signing, autograph books, scraps of paper. We moved toward the car, Jim Seff and I running interference. Behind us Frost was saying thank you, thank you, and refusing to sign anything. Looking ahead, I could see that the doors were open and the limousine waiting. Hundreds more people milled outside around the car. He had dreamed his entire life of moments like this, and when the dreams came true *they were every bit as good as he had expected them to be.* At the same time, there was something in Frost that needed to reject the adulation when it took concrete form. In front of me as I struggled through the crowd I saw two girls; one of them looked shy, and held a piece of paper; the other, her bold friend, was urging her, "Go ahead. Give it to him." So the shy one handed Frost a drawing she had made of him during the reading; the old poet squinted and shoved it back at her, still shuffling forward, growling, "What do I want with that?"

WHEN we reached the car, he turned back to the crowd for a moment, before negotiating his way into the back seat, raised his arms above his shoulders like Eisenhower giving the victory sign, and said in a loud, tremulous voice, "Remember me."

"We will," said voices around us and in back of us and in front of us. "We will."

Wedged into the back seat, Frost spoke slowly as the car moved cautiously out into the crowd, turning into the street. Oh, it was wonderful—to come back in this way, to have this kind of tribute. And it was so strange, he said, because even as late as when he was forty-five years old, he had never expected real recognition. He only hoped, he only felt *able* to hope, that he might make a couple of little poems that would stick. Stick in an anthology somewhere.

I listened to him, moved, and feeling closer to him than I had ever felt or dared to feel. Many times I had found myself amused or aghast at a poet's vanity—since I first discovered it at Bread Loaf—Frost's or my own or another's. But "vanity" was a word used for the light side of a heavy thing. "Fame is the spur," said Milton, in lines that faintly embarrass a good many people, "that last infirmity of noble minds." The notion of fame embarrasses us because we confuse it with *mere* vanity, like preening before a mirror. Or we confuse it with celebrity, as if Milton had been confessing his desire to become Johnny Carson. Fame is a word for the love that everyone wants, impersonal love, love from strangers for what we are, what we do or make. People write poems when they are ten so that their mothers will love them; when they are sixteen so that their peers will love them; when they are thirty (and eighty-eight) so that the Muse will love them, and ages to come, and all men and women, universally, forever and ever, as long as the language exists and maybe longer. Although Frost had become a contemporary celebrity, and although Hill Auditorium resembled Johnny Carson's audience more than Milton's, Frost's response to applause came from his deep and vast ambition to be a great poet, to be immortal, to write poems that would stick. His ambition was never merely to be a celebrated poet—that is mere vanity; it was larger and more serious than that, for he knew that to write great poems he had to make perfect works of art, which embodied wisdom and knowledge beyond the perfection of art. In pursuit of such ambition you may become pitiless and harsh to those around you. Like Orpheus you kill your wife a second time, by turning around to see if she enjoys your singing; then perhaps you deserve to be torn apart by the Thracian ladies, or by the Furies.

Or you think you deserve it; the poet sees to his own punishment. I was watching Frost's face in the faint light of the back seat, and suddenly his face turned dark, "But it's sad too," he said. He spoke of "sadness," which is a faint and crepuscular word, but his face looked more like "despair" or "agony." "It has a sad side, too," he said. For a while he said nothing; I did not know what he meant. "We were so poor," he said. I remembered the years at Derry, the deaths of children, suicide, madness.

I LEFT him at Inglis House, to eat his supper with undergraduates. He asked if he would see me the next day, and I told him that I hadn't planned on it. He asked if I could visit him in Vermont next summer and I told him I could.

The next morning I had an errand in Detroit, so I wasn't there when he telephoned. He wanted me to come over and talk with him, he told my wife Kirby. He had been reading *String* when he went to bed, he told her, and he wanted to talk to me some more about it. He asked if I could come over in the afternoon before he left for the airport; no, she said, I was teaching then, but she'd ask me to telephone him when I got back for lunch. Then she told him that she liked his reading the night before. The compliment allowed him to ask a question that had been troubling him: he had brought two different black suits with

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him, he told her, and while he was out on the platform last night he had realized that he was wearing the pants from one suit and the coat from another; could she tell? could she notice? Did she think anyone noticed? She could tell him without hypocrisy that she had noticed nothing, and he seemed relieved; well, he said, he guessed they were pretty much the same color.

When I called him up we made it definite about Vermont next summer. "I want to see a lot more of you," he said, and referred to me again in metaphor as his son. All of this visit, he had remarked how tall I had grown. "I hardly recognized you," he said, "when we first met. I didn't remember you were so tall." On the way to the press conference he had said, "You're getting taller every time I look at you." When I was sixteen at Bread Loaf I had my full height; it was as if Frost had to invent a new, larger man to explain his interest. Then on the telephone he returned to *String too Short to be Saved*. "So much more happened to you than ever happened to me," he said, about a book in which little happened. Then he said something I carry with me. "You can do anything in poetry you want to do," he said; I took it, correctly, that he meant to say that I hadn't done a great deal.

5.

In June, on our way from New Hampshire back to Michigan, we stopped at Frost's cabin on the Homer Noble Farm at Ripton in Vermont, near Bread Loaf.

We were to come at midmorning. First we called at the old farmhouse, where Kathleen and Ted Morrison spent their summers, about two hundred yards downhill from Frost's cabin. Mrs. Morrison telephoned uphill to the cabin, and told us that Robert would be ready for us in fifteen or twenty minutes. I felt annoyed—ungenerous, suspicious—as if someone with power kept me waiting in order to assert power. We passed the time of day with Mrs. Morrison—who must have spent so many hours like this, as doorkeeper or receptionist—until the phone rang and we were directed toward the cabin. It was a cool, sharp day, little sparks of rain in our eyes, a quick wind, as Kirby and I struggled uphill with our children. The log cabin appeared before us, not beautiful but comfortable, and the old man opened the door, smiling and handsome and vigorous. Behind him a fierce fire of birch logs blazed in the living-room fireplace. He had kept us waiting—he told us when he let us in—because it was such a raw and rainy day; he wanted to have a good fire going.

We visited for two hours, five of us, and the children were attentive and quiet. Frost monologued most of the time, out of his deafness. He wore a white shirt, dark trousers, and canvas shoes with thick rubber soles which comforted his feet. The flap of his belt— the loose part that sticks out past the buckle—incompletely fitted into the leather loop that was supposed to restrain it; this incompleteness bothered my daughter Philippa, who spent much of the two hours attempting to straighten the belt through the loop and smooth it flat. Frost accepted her ministry without complaint. Late in the visit, Philippa made her only show of boredom. "Do you have a TV?" she asked him. There was no set visible in the cabin. Frost would accept adulation from anyone. He looked down on the three-year-old, smiling from his deaf tower, and acknowledged: "You've seen me on TV?"

He rambled on, friendly and impersonal. He had turned down an invitation from Robert and Ethel Kennedy that day; they had asked him to a dinner dance, and he told us about it, bragging and making fun of himself. "I never been to a dinner dance," he said. "That's not my sort of thing, a dinner dance. They throw each other in the pool. I would have been ashamed. Not for them, for myself." And he told about Ethel showing him around the grounds, which were "affluent," he said. "We live like Republicans," Ethel told him, "and act like Democrats." Then maybe Frost felt he had gone far enough, showing fondness for the Kennedys. Just the other day, he told us, a Philadelphia newspaper had asked him to write a short patriotic essay, two hundred and fifty or three hundred words, on how the country had changed after Kennedy's election. The notion made Frost impatient. "That's *bunk*," he said. "It's not the administration. It was always there."

So his talk went, in June of 1962, with this strange and happy audience. And all the time, as I sat listening and relaxed, I was aware that I would almost certainly never see him again, aware that this eighty-eight-year-old complexity, that I had seen walk out of the ground when I was sixteen, that I had admired, despised, feared, and loved—would go into the ground forever, before I could see him again. I could almost look ahead to a morning next winter, when we turned on the radio at breakfast and heard that Robert Frost had died in Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. And I could feel the loss as I would not have felt it a year earlier. I would feel—after so many years of fear and defense—that I had lost a model of survival, endurance; a model you need not so much at sixteen as at thirty-five.

That morning in the cabin Frost was vigorous and many-sided, determined to survive, complex and energetic. He talked about other poets; while we had visited New Hampshire, Frost had returned to Ann Arbor—yet again—to receive an honorary degree along with Theodore Roethke. Frost had known Roethke before, and spoke of him tolerantly, but criticized him—of all things—for being so competitive with other poets. Perhaps it was Roethke's *style* which bothered Frost: Roethke made his competitiveness obvious with a

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boyish enthusiasm. (A few months after Frost's death I saw Roethke in Seattle—not long before Roethke died, as it happened. He met me as I came into a house for a party, pulled me aside, dragged yards of galley out of the pockets of his jacket, and sat me down to read *The Far Field,* saying, "I've got a book coming out that's going to drive Wilbur and Lowell *into the shadows.*" This announcement was made without malice toward Wilbur or Lowell.) Frost asked me as well if I knew a poet from the Midwest, a man I'll call Harry Dutcher who was writing a book on him. Frost had met him and liked him a lot. Was Harry Dutcher a good poet? I said he was, and tried to say what kind of a good poet he was. Frost listened intently, and I felt that I could follow a trail of feelings across his face. I could see Frost the schemer, wanting Dutcher to write a favorable book, anxious that I should carry Frost's flattery back to Dutcher. But Frost was a poor dissembler, and I could tell that his liking for Dutcher was genuine. And when Frost asked me the quality of Dutcher's poems, he wanted to hear two distinct answers: one Robert Frost wanted to hear that Dutcher was good, because Frost liked him; another wanted to hear that Dutcher was bad, and be rid of a potential steeple-climber.

As we chatted, I looked around his room, at the lapboard he used for writing, at the books he was reading, notes sticking out of them—Robinson's edition of Chaucer was there, and a volume of Horace. And I remember him attacking the idea that there was an American language. That notion was silly, he said; at least the notion that American and English poets were writing their poems in a different language was silly. Then with his usual ambivalence he contradicted himself: he said he wrote the way he talked, and it was an American way; he preferred the way he talked to the way Englishmen talked. "You went over there, too," he told me. I had spent three years in England, and would return a year later. "I'm glad you didn't stay over there and turn into an Englishman." I don't know if Frost knew that I had thought about it; he sounded as if he knew. Then he said something astonishing, that reflected his new amiability. "I like Eliot, and I like Pound . . ."—of course these clauses necessarily led into "but"—"I like Eliot and I like Pound," he told us, "but they left us behind. They should have stayed over here." He meant what he said; still, the old mind needed to flip again: "Of course, I heard an Englishman say, 'What's there to stay for?' "—and he laughed a brief, mellow laugh.

It was late in the morning. He walked to the door and looked out at the sun beginning to shine through the damp air. "It's done rainin', ain't it?" he said. It was time to go. We shook hands all around, and talked about when we would see each other again. With eighty-eight years on one of us, we agreed to make this Vermont summer visit an annual occasion, and to stay longer next time.

We said these things as Frost walked us to our car. As we started off I watched him in the rear-view mirror, and saw him suddenly run after us. I stopped, and he caught up with us; he leaned in the window on the driver's side, and reminded me to give his good wishes to Harry Dutcher when I saw him; he repeated that he hoped he was a good poet. We said goodbye again and I started up. This time I didn't look in the mirror, but slowed down because of a hole in the driveway, when I realized that Robert Frost had run after us again—eighty-eight years old, with sore feet, jogging after the car—because his face suddenly appeared at my window. He had thought of one more thing; I would please *not* tell Harry that Frost had hoped he was a good poet, because that would reveal that Frost had not read his work.

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Do the American People Know What They Want?

Paul H. Weaver

WHEN President Carter announced his proposals for reforming welfare policy last summer in Plains, reporters were quick to take note of a peculiar feature of his statement. Not once in the course of what he had to say did he use the phrase "welfare reform." Indeed, it was necessary to pay rather close attention to his words to grasp what he was really proposing. The casual listener would have been aware, instead, of a bold presidential initiative to abolish welfare once and for all and to replace it with something completely different—a program to provide Americans with "better jobs and income."

Had the Carter program been a typical exercise in fraudulent policy leadership, his reticence would have been understandable—though in that case, following the usage of contemporary politics, he would have declared his commitment to "welfare reform" in every third sentence. But in fact Carter's program was a serious effort to contend with an area of public policy that is all but universally acknowledged to be overdue for reform. It was not, to be sure, a legislative initiative of the sort that fires the imagination or delights the mind. It was merely competent, which is to say, in many respects a bit disheartening, but withal something a citizen could be grateful for a President's having undertaken. Yet Carter seemed intent on evading full personal credit for what he was proposing and on making it less than clear to the American people that under his leadership the U.S. government was doing something important that needed doing, and doing it pretty well.

A few days before Carter announced his non-welfare reform, the New York *Times* published the results of a public-opinion poll that explained why the President was being so modest. The poll showed that when you ask Americans whether they favor expensive programs to aid the poor, the blind, dependent children, and so on, the answer, by a margin of something like five to one, is yes. But if you ask Americans what they think of "welfare" programs, two-thirds of them say that they do not like them. As a deputy assistant secretary of HEW put it during a television round-table in the aftermath of the Plains announcement, the word "welfare" has come to have a "negative connotation." The President was aware of this, and wanting to avoid semantic contamination, he put together a statement that carefully did not describe exactly what he was proposing.

DO AMERICANS know what they want? There is no dearth of evidence these days to suggest that they do not; the *Times*'s discovery of public enthusiasm for helping the poor and public distaste for "welfare" is not an isolated case. Consider, for example, the public's attitudes toward business. Americans, to judge from the opinion surveys, like their economic system. Ask them if it is the most productive, most efficient, and generally most admirable system in the world, and by an all but unanimous vote they say yes. Does the system presuppose the making of profits? Again, by an overwhelming margin, yes. Are Americans in favor of private enterprise? Also yes. Would things be better if the government owned or ran the nation's economic institutions? No, according to the polls. For that matter, how do Americans compare business and government? A long series of surveys going back many years now shows that public esteem for business institutions is distinctly higher than it is for the federal government. A typical study of this sort was conducted by *U.S. News and World Report* in 1976, and it found that on a combined scale of decency and efficacy, Americans ranked, on a list of twenty-six institutions, small business third, business executives eleventh, large business thirteenth—and the Presidency twentieth, the regulatory agencies twenty-third, the federal bureaucracy twenty-fifth, and politicians twenty-sixth.

Yet if Americans like their economic system, the opinion polls also make it clear that they are not of one mind on the subject. By and large the public regards business, especially big business, as an institution that does not ordinarily stop to scruple if the pursuit of its goals might harm individuals. The public estimates corporate profits to be some six or seven times higher than they actually are, and in doing so it is not trying to signal approval or admiration. In spite of everything they profess to believe about the virtues of the private economy and the infirmities of government, regulators, and politicians, well over half of the American people think that government regulation of busi-

PAUL H. WEAVER, an associate editor of *Fortune*, writes frequently about politics and journalism.

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ness should be maintained at its present level or expanded.

Or consider, as another example, the much heralded, long awaited new "conservatism" that now is said finally to have arisen in the electorate. Today more than twice as many Americans identify themselves as "conservatives" as identify themselves as "liberals." And on the surface at least, these numbers would indeed seem to portend a major shift toward the Right. Yet a closer inspection suggests that what they demonstrate is not so much a resurgence of conservatism as an upwelling of confusion. For these self-identified conservatives, though they narrowly preferred Gerald Ford to Jimmy Carter in the 1976 presidential election, identify more with the Democractic party than with the Republicans (45 per cent vs. 35 per cent), voted for Democratic congressional candidates over their Republican competitors by a margin of 53 per cent to 46 per cent last year, and are in favor of maintaining or increasing federal social programs by majorities on the order of two to one.

Nor is it only in the views of self-identified conservatives that one encounters major contradictions. Over the past dozen years or so, there has been a sharp and sustained decline in the esteem Americans profess for the leadership and performance of virtually every economic, social, and political institution. Recently, to be sure, the trend appears to have bottomed out, and some analysts now argue that public regard for American institutions has begun, slowly, to climb back up. Even if that is the case, however, the reputation of government, business, education, medicine, and so forth is far lower today than it was in the late 1950's and early 1960's, and for many years now observers have argued, and not implausibly, that the legitimacy of the system itself has been seriously eroded.

Yet at the same time, Americans have been strongly, one almost wants to say triumphantly, optimistic about their personal prospects and those of their country. According to a series of studies conducted by the Potomac Institute, throughout the entire period during which public confidence was supposed to be declining, Americans on balance felt that they personally were doing better than they had five years earlier and that they would be doing better still five years into the future. And they expressed comparable beliefs about the country as a whole. Even as they seemed to withdraw their trust and consent from the nation's elites and institutions, they were telling the Potomac Institute's interviewers that in five years the state of the nation would be better than at present.

A similar but even more important contradiction emerges from surveys of American attitudes toward the entire system of liberal government that has prevailed in this country throughout most of the present century. By enormous margins of three and four to one, Americans these days consistently support the New Deal tradition and the full range of present-day public programs to which it has given birth. Indeed, something like half the population would like to see the government provide even more benefits and intervene in more areas of social life than it already does. And by large majorities Americans vote accordingly. Today the Democrats control about two-thirds of the seats in Congress and the fifty state legislatures, and there is no present prospect that the Republicans will mount a serious challenge to this extraordinary hegemony.

Yet by almost equally large margins, Americans also say that the institutions responsible for creating and running the New Deal state are currently in the hands of liars, cheats, frauds, and profligates. Three-fifths of them think the government is run for the benefit of a powerful few. Even more assent to the proposition that the system is so arranged that the rich get richer and the poor poorer. Just about everyone ranks the nation's principal representative institutions—Congress, the political parties, the politicians, even the Presidency—near the bottom of any list of American institutions. Last year the electorate manifested a powerful inclination to vote against presidential-primary candidates who were associated with Washington, D.C. In other words, Americans seem to love the New Deal state and to detest everyone and everything associated with establishing it, running it, defending it, and expanding it.

. THE public's mistrust of the nation's political elites may damage the prospects of the kind of New Deal governance it prefers, but in one respect at least that sentiment is both understandable and justified. For the conduct of these elites leaves a great deal to be desired, and in no respect more so than in their performance of the classic function of all political elites—that of defining "issues," i.e., shaping the topics and problems on which public discussion focuses and around which public opinion coalesces. Public opinion may be incoherent these days, but its incoherence is as nothing compared with the incoherence that characterizes the way American political elites go about posing the questions to which public opinion is, as it were, the response.

A little known but utterly typical example of this incoherence is to be found in the movement against paperwork that has been under way in Washington in recent years. Complaints about the paperwork burden the federal government imposes on businesses, universities, and other institutions are not new to American politics. They go back at least to the decade of the New Deal, and on several occasions since then—usually in the wake of major waves of domestic legislation—they have surfaced as an articulate public concern. The most recent anti-paperwork crusade came together

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and set out to do battle in the fall of 1974. At the time, businessmen were up in arms over new reporting burdens Washington had imposed on them, and mayors, governors, and university presidents were, if anything, even angrier. Thus Congress was quick, as it got wind of the furor, to establish a Commission on Federal Paperwork, and some time later President Ford set in motion a paperwork-cutting program within the executive branch. Since Ford's retirement, that program has been continued and expanded by the Carter administration.

Over the past two years, the anti-paperwork crusaders have carried on with great energy and fanfare (and at no small public expense), and along the way they have managed to ease the nation's paperwork burden, or in any event to reduce the rate of its growth—or so at least the recently submitted final report of the Commission on Federal Paperwork asserts. But they have not thereby quieted the public clamor over paperwork appreciably, and there is no serious likelihood that they ever will. For the public outcry to which the anti-paperwork movement is a response does not in fact concern paperwork as such, the vast bulk of which is perceived as a reasonable, or anyway inevitable, accompaniment of useful public programs. The real outcry addresses itself almost entirely to the reporting requirements imposed by a handful of new and ambitious federal regulatory programs set up to promote pension security, equal employment opportunity, environmental protection, occupational safety and health, and the like. These requirements are indeed felt to be excessive—along with all the other, often more substantial, costs of compliance.

Thus the anti-paperwork movement is destined to fail because there is no intelligible sense in which the country can be said to have a "paperwork problem," and because what genuinely does ail it in this regard cannot be cured by a commission or a task force that operates out of the Office of Management and Budget. What the country really has is a "new regulation problem," and the only body that can do anything significant about it is Congress itself. The costs and insults of the new regulation are no accident, no consequence of mere bureaucratic mismanagement. They are in almost every case mandated by Congress and written into the law, and they will not be alleviated until Congress rewrites the statutes so that the costs of these programs can be balanced intelligently and evenhandedly against their benefits.

IN THE anti-paperwork community in Washington, and among the institutions that raised the issue in the first place, all this is understood, but it is not really admitted. To do so would require them to abandon the non-issue of paperwork and to take on the thorny problems of the new regulation itself—and they prefer not to do that. For one thing, the paperwork issue "works" quite nicely. Paperwork is physical; it can be photographed and televised. Its burdens are easily grasped, so it makes good copy. By contrast, imbalance between the benefits and costs of regulatory programs—the central problem of the new regulation—is much harder to put across.

Moreover, the paperwork issue is safe. Everyone is against paperwork, and no one will defend it. Thus there is no political risk in mounting a dramatic assault on the paperwork problem. By contrast, anyone who dares to speak ill of the new regulatory programs—or even to suggest that there are more effective or less expensive ways in which they might proceed—can count on being attacked as an enemy of health, safety, environmental cleanliness, the human rights of workers, and so on. Indeed, merely failing to pay maximum obeisance to these social goals can be hazardous to one's political health.

Best of all, the paperwork issue permits those who pursue it to assume a heroic posture. The culture has a deep distaste for bureaucracy and all its works, and those who attack paperwork can cast themselves as uncompromising defenders of the people as a whole against the depredations of evil bureaucratic forces and special interests. By contrast, trying to make new regulatory programs more sensible is a complex and thankless process of choosing among evils—and of repudiating the entire idea of heroic policy-making, inasmuch as the weaknesses of the new regulation derive from its congressional supporters' desire to promote health, safety, environmental cleanliness, and the like in a similarly heroic manner.

Do Americans know what they want where the paperwork problem is concerned? By definition they do not and cannot. They could indeed have a coherent view of the new regulatory programs; if one were to ask how much health, safety, or environmental cleanliness they wanted in light of the costs and alternatives, a meaningful response would be possible. But that is precisely how the question is *not* being put these days, those involved preferring to take an easier, safer, more politically profitable course of action. I am not aware of any public-opinion polls that have plumbed American attitudes toward paperwork, but it is hard to believe that the results of such a poll would not show that huge majorities are "against" it—just as polls do in fact reveal that huge majorities are "for" health and safety and against the kind of corruption that can result when administrative controls (i.e., paperwork) are weak or nonexistent. Is it any wonder, then, that public opinion on the questions of paperwork and the new regulatory programs should be incoherent, or that Americans these days should feel that their leaders and institutions are unworthy of their trust? Both incoherent views and demoralization are inevitable consequences of the kind of failure of elites that is illustrated by the anti-paperwork crusade.

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THE paperwork problem has parallels across the entire range of policy concerns today, both foreign and domestic. Almost wherever one might choose to look, elites and institutions are at work redefining actual experience in a way that tends to empty public opinion of its ability to arrive at a considered and meaningful position and thereby to influence the course of actual events. In some cases, such redefinition reflects the desire of elites to appear to respond to a real complaint or problem without doing anything consequential about it. In other cases—and they seem, if anything, even more numerous—the process works the other way around. The elites and institutions are committed to projects that would be rejected by the public if these were candidly described, so they redefine their intentions and the situations involved in a way that makes them seem popular even if in fact they are not.

Consider, as an example, the effort that has been under way for a decade now to "democratize" the national conventions of the political parties and to open them up to broader "participation." To listen to the advocates of these reforms, one would imagine that the mass of rank-and-file party members had gone largely unrepresented in the national conventions and that, at their wits' end, they were finally mobilizing their overwhelming numbers to throw the old oligarchs out. In fact, just the opposite is the case. Though the conventions have been dominated by party regulars, they have by no means been unresponsive to the views of the rank and file. Most of the people pressing for party reform are a narrow and exotic minority of the parties' total memberships—principally people with high socioeconomic status and strongly ideological concerns who under traditional party structures were unable to secure the nomination of their preferred candidates. Their real purpose in restructuring the parties is not to make nominations more representative, but to make them less so. However, since a candid presentation of these intentions would do little to advance their cause, they clothe their efforts in the language of "reform," "openness," and "participation," everyone naturally being for all these things and against "bosses."

By now the reformers have been extremely successful, and the changes they have pushed through have transformed the entire nature of the presidential-selection process. Procedurally, the presidential-primary election has become the principal means by which delegations are selected. Structurally, party regulars have been displaced from their position of dominance by upper-middle-class ideologues of the Left in the Democratic party and of the Right in the Republican party. (These elements participate in primaries and open state caucuses at a rate which far exceeds that of any other element of the population.) Thus the parties, despite all appearances to the contrary, have not become more representative, they have become less so. What looks on the surface like "democratization" has been in fact a transfer of power from one oligarchy to another oligarchy, and a less representative one at that. The result, as Professor Everett Ladd among others has pointed out, is a new and disturbing pattern in our presidential politics: the growing prevalence of the unelectable nominee, the consequent rise of the "unnatural landslide" that confers no positive mandate on the winner, and, as a result, a growing inability in the Presidency to represent and lead public opinion.

Is *this* what Americans want? It is hard to believe that it is, and easy to imagine how they could entertain confused or contradictory views on the issue of "party reform" and a sense of powerlessness and alienation vis-à-vis "Washington." For in this case as in the previous one, real issues have been misdefined and the nation has been sent off on a singleminded quest whose predictable negative consequences were not adequately considered or even raised in the first place by those responsible.

Or take the case of the ongoing investigations by the Securities and Exchange Commission—and, earlier, by a variety of congressional committees—into illegal and "questionable" payments by corporations. These inquiries began as a result of the Watergate investigations, which uncovered, among other things, the fact that U.S. corporations, in direct contravention of the laws, had made contributions to the Committee to Reelect the President. But what began as an inquiry into authentic crimes quickly developed into something very different. For as the various official bodies involved pursued the phenomenon, the focus shifted from actions that subverted public policy to actions that supported it—from exposing and discrediting domestic crimes to disclosing conduct that, in however unseemly or unattractive a fashion, had in fact served to bolster anti-Communist regimes in Western Europe and elsewhere and thereby to sustain the central purpose of U.S. foreign policy.

Yet the press, the SEC, and other institutions did not observe these crucial distinctions. From the beginning to the end of the episode they proceeded on the assumption that all "questionable" payments were evils and had to be rooted out; they did not in public appear to consider that there could be a reason for protecting an anti-Communist foreign policy even if its conduct or underpinnings were morally unattractive. As a result, a domestic issue was coopted by those critical of U.S. foreign policy and pressed into the service of their policy goals. Disclosures were made that toppled friendly governments and weakened the alliance without there having been any deliberate prior public discussion or decision as to whether these eventualities were on balance desirable.

Was this what Americans wanted? The question cannot be answered meaningfully, for the public was not enabled to consult its settled preferences and arrive at a considered judgment of the matter.

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Elites and institutions proceeded in a way that was easy, safe, or convenient. As a result, most of the relevant issues and arguments were not raised or made, and the foreign-policy issue at stake was resolved unilaterally by those who decided to make the key disclosures.

Now it is possible to make too much of all this. In a large and diverse society, one does not expect public opinion to be a model of intellectual consistency, and especially in such a society should the findings of public-opinion polls be read with a good deal of suspicion. Nor, given the rough-and-tumble of American public life, is it reasonable to expect elites to conduct public discussion with the kind of disinterested precision that one might hope for in a graduate seminar on public policy. Yet the patterns of behavior described above do not represent mere "technical" offenses against standards of political order. To the contrary, they are genuine pathologies. When an overwhelming majority of the electorate supports New Deal governance and at the same time considers the people and institutions responsible for providing such governance to be unworthy of trust or support; when a nation is mired in a seemingly permanent state of demoralization even as the political system is at work satisfying its needs and wishes on an unprecedented scale; when elites and institutions show themselves to be unable or unwilling to handle the most important issues with even a modicum of coherence and candor—when circumstances like these prevail, something fundamental is amiss.

Incoherence and demoralization in public opinion, dishonesty among elites: these are the defining pathologies of our time. Their prevalence reflects the influence of three phenomena or institutions that increasingly shape—and distort—the American system of representation and governing.

1. *The adversary style.* Nothing, it seems, is more capable of moving the hearts of men today than the assumption of an adversary posture toward the way things are in the society at large. This posture combines the moralism and meliorism that have long characterized American mass culture with the anti-bourgeois ethos of the high culture, and more and more these days it serves as a vehicle for political action. To do something in politics, from passing a bill to getting elected, one attacks things, the more indignantly and uncompromisingly the better.

Richard Fenno has described the growing influence of the adversary style in congressional elections: "Every Representative with whom I traveled," he wrote in 1974, "criticized the Congress and portrayed himself, by contrast, as a fighter against its manifest evils. Members run *for* Congress by running *against* Congress."

Not surprisingly, this adversary spirit has begun to shape the making of public policy. A problematic condition becomes redefined as a scandal, an outrage, or a crisis. Its cause is depicted as the wrongdoing of various "interests" and other malefactors. Compromise with them, even acknowledgment of their legitimacy, is out of the question. A "strong" bill must be written. What often emerges is a statute that spells out a large and often pure goal, that enjoins administrators to pursue it singlemindedly, and that prohibits them from attending to legitimate competing goals that are bound to be affected by the pursuit. Environmental legislation provides perhaps the best illustration of this style: in setting certain kinds of air-pollution regulations, the Environmental Protection Administration is enjoined to concern itself only with public health; the social costs of achieving public health are not to be taken into account in making decisions.

2. *The national press.* In 1963, CBS and NBC inaugurated their half-hour nightly network news programs, and shortly thereafter the New York *Times* and the Washington *Post* lost most of their serious local competition. At about the same time, a new generation of editorial executives assumed control of the newsweeklies. As a result, American journalism, from having been a diverse set of essentially local institutions, became a much less diverse national institution; it acquired a national audience, addressed itself preeminently to national issues, and soon started to exercise national influence. And it has changed the entire structure of American politics.

The national press's effect on campaigning, on the political party, and on the process of mobilizing an electoral majority is widely acknowledged; officeholders today are more responsive to ideas and images and less beholden to, or at any rate less bound up with, local institutions and local interests. The national press is also having profound effects on the shape of the American political sensibility and the conduct of public discussion. It has intensified the public's awareness of ideologies and "issues." It has also increased awareness of conflict, which in turn has raised levels of demoralization. Perhaps above all, the press, especially the national press, has taken the adversary style to heart.

3. *Electoral praetorianism.* Once upon a time a candidate for office typically found himself in an environment whose chief characteristic was a scarcity of the resources necessary for getting elected. Thus candidates had to depend on local organizations, and typically on the local political party, for the necessary labor, campaign skills, money, and the like. This dependency created linkages between the officeholder and his constituency, and these linkages guaranteed a kind of answerability.

Increasingly this is no longer the case. In recent decades the typical candidate has found at hand a growing fund of politically relevant resources that are not controlled by the local party or constituency organization. The new technology of politics gives him opinion pollsters, computers, direct

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mail, professional fund raising, and professional campaign management. Incumbents have additional staff, research, and other resources provided at the taxpayers' expense. The advent of public financing of elections carries this trend further. Increasingly, therefore, the candidate is on his own, beholden to no one (usually, anyway, no one local), and more capable than ever before of blurring the process of accountability. As Josiah Lee Auspitz and Clifford W. Brown, Jr., have put it, we are moving from an era in which a "representative" ethic prevailed to one in which "strategic politics" has become the norm. Such a politics thrives on the misleading definition of an issue—what Sir Henry Sumner Maine called the "hasty generalization."

The growing influence of these three institutions—the adversary style, the national press, and electoral praetorianism—is altering the entire character of American politics. Representative institutions are being cut loose from their constituencies; the traditional, locally-based, interest-aggregating system of representation is giving way to a form of plebiscitarianism in which individual candidates appeal directly to mass audiences on the basis of images. And public discussion, the environment in which these plebiscitarian appeals take place, is increasingly cut off from the empirical and moral reality of political life in a liberal democracy. Increasingly it is unable to convey the intractable conflicts of interests and values that are the stuff of liberal democracy, insisting instead on seeing politics as a kind of Armageddon pitting the whole against the parts.

Under the influence of this kind of politics, government cannot govern. Issues and problems cannot be recognized for what they are, and thus policy cannot be shaped or administered in a way that will allow it to become both effective and legitimate. Government will vacillate between ineffectuality at the one extreme and draconianism at the other. Not being in control of the effects of its programs, government will be unable to organize consent for them, or ultimately for itself. Hidden policy—those unintended or unacknowledged effects of programs fashioned in the unreal atmosphere of plebiscitarian public discussion—will come to dominate the society. Thus government will become an instrument increasingly available to those whose purposes, if stated openly, could not get public backing. Government will find itself increasingly at odds, even at war, with society.

There are also profound consequences for public opinion in this state of affairs. The constant resort to the adversary mode stirs conflict, lowers trust, and demoralizes citizens. And the effort of plebiscitarian politicians to find safe, consensual positions and appeals creates incoherence in public opinion, which in turn empties it of its competence to control the conduct of public life.

So what the results of the public-opinion polls and the recent course of public discussion are telling us is not that the people are incompetent by nature, or that democracy is out of harmony with the nature of things. The incoherence of public opinion, the people's low esteem for their representative institutions, and their generally demoralized state are signs, rather, of the erosion of the institutions of liberal democracy and the rise of a new set of institutions founded on illiberal ideas of political life. To begin with, this new system will seem democratic. In the end, it may well not be.

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Her Son, the Teen-Aged Ascetic

A Story

Alice M. Green

A man may remember his childhood with pleasure, but where is one who does not wince at the memory of his adolescence?

—JOHN A. RICE, *I Came Out of the 18th Century*

ALL that ninety-degree summer, Pete frantically pedaled his bicycle—in a frenzy of sexual tension, loneliness, and gastric upset. He rode eight miles, each way, to the pool in order to swim two miles every day. He rode out in the countryside for still more exercise, and on city streets at night. He rode downtown to the health-food store where he worked Saturdays and bought his supplies. He would not ride, for any reason, in a car. He lived on large doses of natural vitamins and protein supplements. All ordinary food posed some kind of threat: preservatives, dyes, refining processes, diethylstilbestrol, sugar, saturated fats, the paralyzing requirements of a well-balanced diet, or—merely—some digestive agony of his private experience.

He was sixteen. He was obsessed with guarding his health. Small for his age anyway, he had lost fifteen pounds. He was exhausting himself. One night, he rode off on his bike threatening to throw himself under a car.

They sought to distract him with a trip to the Cape. He pedaled while they motored to arranged meeting points. He consumed his pills and pastes at the motel while they ate at restaurants. The odor of his indigestion fouled their shared quarters at night.

His desperation had been growing, in spurts, since the start of high school, two years earlier. It began with the dropping of onerous courses and becoming too involved with athletics. He kept a notebook of *Do's* and *Don't's* for avoiding heart disease and tried to adhere to all of them. He blamed his lost sense of well-being on lasting effects from that spring's bout of mononucleosis and all his efforts were bent on physical restoration: strenuous weight lifting, wrestling team, endurance swimming, jogging, hard cycling, and—ever increasingly—restricted diet. Schoolwork strained his ability to concentrate and was detested. Other students, he complained, came to school with colds and smoked in the halls. He left resentful notes on the kitchen table: "School is hazardous to physical and mental health."

"He's trying to mortify the flesh!" his mother cried to their long-time pediatrician. "I don't know what I'm supposed to *do* when he threatens to kill himself on his bicycle!"

To the doctor, he seemed in good physical shape and they blundered on.

MEETING the parents for the first time at his office in the Child Guidance Clinic, the psychiatrist reads the note they have brought with them. They had returned from an overnight trip to find it on the pillow of their bed:

> . . . hope your trip was worthwhile . . . haven't been able to sleep or eat for three days . . . can't live through another year like this past one . . . wish I were dead. I can't think of anyone better to tell this to than my parents.
>
> Your son, Pete.

Yes, the doctor will make himself available, but will the boy agree to see him? There may be some difficulty, their son has already stated his objections: he does not think it will do any good, and it is too expensive. The doctor replies, "Like all medical treatment, there is no guarantee. But, I don't think you know how expensive it is—my fee is seventy dollars a visit." He pauses. "You should know, of course, you are eligible for county clinic services."

The couple consult silently with their eyes. The husband nods in affirmation. "I don't want to take any chances with my boy," she says. "I've discovered that doctors are not interchangeable."

It is agreed. Pete is to be seen by the doctor once a week; the parents are each to be seen, separately, on alternating weeks.

IT IS October. Dr. K. is seeing Pete's mother alone for the first time. "Tell me about yourself," he begins. "I understand you've had a hard time personally."

She was not expecting this direction. Her tears well and overflow. The doctor pushes a box of tissues toward her.

"Have you been very depressed?"

ALICE M. GREEN lives in Schenectady, New York. This is her first published story.

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"It was an illness that changed things," she said at last. "But I've tried not to impose it too much on the children; I really have."

"Tell me about it."

Her voice chokes. She is rendered inarticulate. Her major effort is bent on inhibiting tears. "It's not that I don't want to," she says, ending the struggle, " it's just that I can't."

"Tell me what sort of person you are, your background, what sort of ambience Pete lives in."

On more comfortable terrain now, she recites highlights of her history and personality: born to a depressive mother who returned home to take care of her—by then—year-old baby to find herself emotionally deserted by her husband and who spent her life, thereafter, in and out of mental hospitals; anxious, studious child, adoring of her charming father; breakdown after the still-birth of her first baby and the sudden death of her father, followed by two years of analysis.

"It was an analysis in which nothing happened —except that I got better. When I said that at termination, the analyst said I got what I needed. By then I had two of my children and I guess life had to go on."

Feeling her summary is concluded, she sits silently. The psychiatrist waits out the pause.

"In the hospital, when I was so sick a couple of years ago, I thought I was making up my mind not to abandon my children. I don't believe you can really decide about such things, but I felt so strongly that I should see them through." Again, she pauses. "I would say that the ambience in which Pete has been living for the past couple of years has been one of tremendous tension and strain."

The doctor refers again to the boy's disturbance.

"He's only struggling with the age-old universal questions of right and wrong," she says defensively.

"I should be surprised if a seventeen-year-old-boy had thought of anything new," the doctor retorts.

"Well, some of them never wrestle at all."

"That's another way of coping. It's the intensity of Pete's struggle that is noteworthy."

The doctor requests that, for their next meeting, she think about their methods of control—over the children's behavior and their own, as well as how the children exercise control.

Two weeks later, having construed the suggestion as an assigment, Pete's mother produces a detailed, typed outline of each family member's control devices: Other and Self, Verbal and non-Verbal, ranged from Most Frequent to Rare. Her own style of self-control, she reports, leans heavily on reflection, verging on obsessing. ("Can *you* keep from crying by considering things?" Alice asked. "That's the way it's done," the Queen said with great decision.) The chart shows too that she and her husband do a lot of withdrawing, and verbal controls predominate. Bribes are out and penalties are rare. The children try persuasion and ingratiation but they fuss a lot, one way and another.

"This is for your information," she says, handing the chart to Dr. K. "'You can see just from the formal pattern on the page that the children are relatively defenseless—they're so *undifferentiated*."

The doctor looks over the chart before adding it to the file. She feels the subject of controls has been disposed of and, as such, it never comes up for discussion again.

In the meetings that followed, there seemed to be no cues from the doctor as to how she should proceed. The old rules of her own analysis certainly did not apply. She set about to describe Pete's present behavior and past development, and to bring in appropriate accounts of other family members. She hoped to gather from the doctor some guides for parental conduct. But the specific question that soon came to occupy her thoughts was: What ails Pete?—what is at the bottom of his extreme behavior? What made him take to heart, so much more earnestly than his peers, some eighth-grade instruction in avoiding heart disease? The entire class was exposed to the information and the warnings; why was it so particular with Pete?

"He had always seemed a fey little boy," she relates, "saying and doing amusing, unlikely things that made neighbors and teachers smile. From the beginning, he reacted to frustration with anguish. A low birth-weight baby, he cried continuously and inconsolably for many months. Later, it seemed he went to pieces—on the playground or at home—if he couldn't eat frequently. He was quite small, sweet-natured, and submissive in relation to his bigger, older sister and—usually—more aggressive playmates. Nursery-school attendance at three did not work out well—he was home being treated for infections at least half the time and was never reconciled to staying at nursery school without me. In first grade, too, he was frequently sick and perhaps he kept some exaggerated sense of being small and sickly and somehow at a disadvantage. He always admired, and took for his friends, the larger, rowdy boys. He was never in jeopardy from their roughness; they seemed to respect his vulnerability and, of course, he never threatened them. 'Dee udder mudders' always liked to have him visit because he was easy to have around and that gave me a break; otherwise, he tried to keep me within sight. He would call in at the back door, 'Mommy!' and when I answered, say, 'I just wanted to know where you were.' If Daddy phoned from work and asked, 'Where's Mommy?' Pete would tell him and hang up; he thought Daddy just wanted to know where I was."

The doctor scribbles very quickly and copiously when she relates her toilet-training practices. She had believed the children would clearly indicate their readiness and had never thought of initiating

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any effort herself, until prodded to do so by assorted experts. ("They learn frustration tolerance by appropriate doses of frustration," one such authority had instructed her.)

"As he grew older, his expressions of frustration continued to be vehement, even despairing. He used a little ritual chant—'Shit, fuckin', dammit'—that he hoped would make things work (wasn't that what Daddy did when the car wouldn't go?). By pre-puberty, the chant had changed to, 'It's too complicated; I can't do anything.' Usually, having recited his magic and fussed impressively, he was ready after a time to try again. In self-defense, sometimes I removed the source of frustration: a car model or carpentry task. Shy, of our three children the most cuddly, the most willing to be held and kissed, as a little fellow, he was openly imitative of his dad. 'When am I going to grow as big as Daddy?' he wailed when he was measured the smallest in his fourth-grade class." In order to console him, and because she had believed it, she had wagered him the time would come when he was about eighteen years old.

"Pete claims his Bar Mitzvah was the most memorable event of his life," his mother continues. "It must have been a puzzling situation for him. To his father, it was a solemn religious occasion; to his mother, the main concern was the food. I don't believe in printed invitations and catered affairs for thirteen-year-olds—for people of our modest means," she explains. "So I did a lot of nervous fussing and trying things out on the family until I was satisfied and we were all sick of it!"

"And how did it go?" asks Dr. K.

"Everyone seemed pleased," she says.

Almost up to the moment of the ceremony Pete had lamented, "I'm not *may*-ture enough!"—as if he took quite literally—as an injunction—the affirmation: Today you are a man.

IT WAS an unseasonably warm night for late fall and Pete was fed up with studying. He banged around furiously in his room for a while, then stomped noisily downstairs. In the kitchen, where the rest of the family was sitting, he began slamming drawers and utensils. His father, glowering, remained silent. His little brother, Andy, looked apprehensive. His mother confronted him.

"What's wrong, Pete?"

"I can't stand it any more. I'm going out on my bike to kill myself on Midtown Road."

Midtown Road was ill-lit and heavily trafficked at this time of night. Pete had refused to add the weight of a light to his ten-speed bicycle.

"You're not going out on your bike in that frame of mind," she scolded.

"Oh yes, I am!"

His father said nothing. She felt helpless and furious. She wanted to move the bike from the basement to the attic, but that would take more than her physical strength. Instead, she followed Pete to the basement, threatening: "You're not going to take the bike out." Pete grasped the handlebars and wheeled the bike toward the door. She snatched a large hammer from the nearby workbench and hacked at the bike, striking three blows before Pete crumpled in tears.

"I don't believe you would *do* that to my bike!" he cried. She had dented the crossbar.

"I had to stop you. You can't go out on the bike tonight," she said icily.

"I wouldn't want to ride it now," he cried. "I'll never ride a bike that looks like that!"

DISCUSSING the incident with Dr. K., she remarks, "I'm rarely sure I'm right, but when I am sure, I'm capable of radical action."

"I want you to think about that statement," the doctor says.

But she can deduce nothing further from it, then or thereafter. It seems to stand as a complete account of the fact, without any ramifications. Instead she worries the question, "Was there some other way I could have stopped him? I don't like to prevail in the way I did."

After countless reproaches from Pete and angry demands for restitution, after sleepless nights and two weeks of brooding, she suggests to Dr. K.: "I could have grounded him, I suppose. He's impressed when his friends are grounded. Once he asked me, 'How come I'm never grounded?' I said I guessed he never did anything wrong. I could have said, 'You're grounded' and it would have stopped him dead in his tracks. It just wasn't in my repertoire."

Doctor K. makes notes and says nothing.

AT THE bike repair shop where Pete sent his mother—the one farthest away and, he claimed, exclusively competent to judge safety and feasibility of repair—they recommended a bit of tape to hide the small, offending dent. Pete was outraged. He insisted there was a safety hazard, he would never ride the bike in that condition.

"YOU know," she continues with Dr. K., " 'You're grounded' is not an appropriate response to 'I'm going out to kill myself on my bicycle.' You know it isn't!"

The doctor shakes his head without comment.

"WHY did you take me so seriously?" Pete later asked. "I didn't mean it. Why did you believe me?"

"I always take you seriously," she said.

Weeks later, he uttered the threat again.

"Uh huh," she said, continuing to clean up the kitchen.

"Oh, you don't believe me!" he accused, with narrowed eyes.

"I believe you," she said. But she was no longer worried.

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PETE's father believed that the origins of the boy's turmoil were his reaction to his short stature, too much pampering in childhood, and—a few years earlier—a friendship with a much older boy that had led to paternal fury and adolescent embarrassment. His mother believed that, more likely, they had too suddenly shifted their expectations: after all that early childhood acceptance, they had rather suddenly become critical and intolerant of the fact that their adolescents did not seem scholarly, disciplined, and properly considerate—as, in memory, they had themselves been. She thought, too, that Pete may not have been adequately prepared, before onset, for the physical aspects of adolescence and that, from their silence, he perhaps deduced that all expression along that line was taboo. They aired these issues nightly during their strolls.

SHE presents these conflicting views to Dr. K. He offers his formulation: in the effort to control strong sexual impulses, the repressive force is applied to other—if not all—aspects of Pete's life. In this way, all pleasurable indulgence has become taboo; generalized phobia has set in. The preoccupation with food can be understood as a metaphor ("an equivalence") for sexual concerns, a displacement from one sphere to another. Pete must be helped to loosen up a bit, indulge himself more freely. Be more sportive, in the manner of his peers.

The difficulty is, she perceives, the sportiveness of his peers runs to pot and booze and junk food, as well as TV and X-rated movies. All of this, along with sugar and tobacco, Pete heartily disdains. His complaint is that his friends are no longer interested in the outdoor life or vigorous activity. And he bores them beyond endurance with hysterical monologues on the subject of healthful diet.

"I suppose," she remarks to the doctor, "sexual neurotics today run to vegetarianism the way they used to tend to tuberculosis."

ALL that winter, through snow and ice, Pete rode Andy's small, rusty sting-ray to school, to the pool every day during lunch period, downtown to work, to any local destination. His face got red and swollen. Icicles dripped from his chin and nose. His father—concerned about safety and affronted by the obvious craziness—forbade riding when the roads were snowy. They quarreled, shouting angrily at each other, until—inevitably—Pete said something intolerable that provoked a show of physical force. ("Hit me, go ahead, why don't you hit me? I deserve it! God wants to punish me!")

He suffered from bouts of prostrating weakness, insomnia, and excruciating gastrointestinal pain. He couldn't concentrate in school, was obsessed with deciding what to eat each day, each meal. He avoided interaction with his schoolmates. At home, every meal took hours to finish: each mouthful interminably masticated, long pauses between bites, longer interruptions between courses. His eating routine ruled out conversation: chewing required total effort. While the family sat at the table, he stood up at the counter to eat, discouraging others from speaking to him. Or he irritably carried some single foodstuff to his room for solitary consumption. His father was enraged by the nightly, noxious smell of steaming collards (the unadmired produce of Pete's backyard garden) and by Pete's occupation of kitchen territory until late every night. His mother was made irritable by Pete's dinnertime preparations at her side each night.

"Well, there's no use despairing," her husband remarked; "it won't work."

"Do you think Pete thought it unreasonable that you made an unpleasant scene over the garden hose?" Dr. K. asks.

"No," she replies, "he knows I'm physically very limited. He just thought it unreasonable that I needed it that minute." She fell silent for a moment.

"Part of the problem is, since I was sick we don't have the same resources—for obvious reasons."

"Why do you say, 'For obvious reasons'?" Dr. K. pursues.

Her voice sticks again, as it had before on this track. Turning her face away from him toward the window, she notices the budding leaves of the trees. She concentrates on them, on their faint quivering in the soft spring breeze—trying to muster control, to keep back the tears. She wants to be able to continue coolly. After many minutes of struggle, she sighs, "Well, well," feeling that now she is really up against it.

"Won't you talk to me about it?" Dr. K. asks with pursed lips, coaxingly. Like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, he would seem to know her stops, would pluck the heart out of her mystery.

"I don't see why I should. There's no use harping on irremediable complaint." She pauses again. Then, composed at last, she adds, "Anyway, I meant that since I was sick, so much more has fallen on Ben's shoulders."

"WE don't laugh as much as we used to," she said to her husband that night.

"Now that I know what it is, it doesn't seem so funny!" he answered.

"PETE has an extremely low pulse rate," his mother remarks to Dr. K. "He seems to have put himself in a state that actually physically requires a high level of activity. You can't keep a highly trained race horse in the paddock."

"Horses have psychological needs too, you know," Dr. K. replies. "Your family seems to have a physiological bias."

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(Once, she had brought a languishing pet rabbit to the vet. He had hesitated over his texts before giving the rabbit a shot of penicillin, muttering, "We don't see many of these unless they're brought in dead off the road." When she phoned again a few days later, he had groaned: "Mrs. Brown, I hate to see you carry that heavy cage down here again. Rabbits have their ups and downs too, you know." And once a pediatrician had chided her: "Babies *do* cry, you know." But that time, the baby really had required an operation.)

She took it for granted that Dr. K. had a psychological bias. It was *quid pro quo,* she thought: a bias is still a bias, even when it is acknowledged and expected.

WHEN his own coping efforts collapsed, Pete called for help: "*MOM!*" At such times he wanted to talk, was more open to suggestions.

"I think your high activity level aggravates your tension," she said. "More is not better than enough."

Pete cut back somewhat on his lap swimming and found he felt better.

"Maybe your stomach is yelling for something yummy in the tummy instead of the stuff you put in it," she said.

Pete tried to indulge in an ice-cream cone, but hours of riding around and around past the store ended in agonized conflict, tearful frustration.

"Pete," she pounced on the opportunity, "a boy of your age simply cannot be experiencing this degree of anguish over an ice-cream cone. The ice-cream cone must stand for something else—maybe some other physical pleasure that you won't permit yourself. Maybe sexual tension is at the bottom of it."

"I don't have any sexual tension."

"Pete, if that's true, you may be the only healthy seventeen-year-old boy extant who is free of it. How do you suppose the other boys your age manage it?"

"They take off after girls."

"I suppose they do, or think about it," she said. "But, even with the sexual revolution, I'd be surprised if there were enough available girls to go around for all the needy seventeen-year-old boys. I'm quite sure they masturbate."

"Oh no," said Pete, "my friends frown on that. It's all right to make out with girls, but they make fun of 'whacking off.' "

"That's what they tell you, but it's only a reflection of their uneasiness about themselves. Like Jimmy, teasing you in school about using pot when he knows it's his habit, not yours. Your Catholic boyfriends may have a particularly hard time accepting this activity but, I can assure you, they all do it."

Then she thought of all the empty cottage cheese and yogurt cartons, glass jars and paper bags that Pete stored in his closet and darkroom. "You know," she said, "I've read that young boys often experience a *tristesse,* a sense of depletion in connection with their early sexual experience. Shakespeare even wrote about 'the expense of spirit in a waste of shame.' "

"What's it like for girls?" Pete asked.

"I think girls may be inclined to feel filled, and fulfilled."

TELLING Dr. K. about this conversation, she says, with some resentment, "All along, I've wished some seasoned male would talk to Pete on this subject, but no one does. After all, I've never been a boy." Now she has gone at least as far as it is appropriate for her to go; is not some word of empathy, even permission, from his father called for?

The doctor does not comment.

"IT sounds like a scene from a recent Broadway play," her friend said. "The father yells from the shower to his nagging wife. 'He'll find out when he gets in the army!' Pete will have to get his permission from someone else."

PETE'S mother felt imposed upon. Just as she was always carrying their father's gripes and objections to the children instead of leaving it to him, so the doctor's interpretation was being carried to Pete through her. She did not doubt that these messages were intended for delivery beyond her.

Talking with Pete, she returned to the idea of tackling his underlying problem head-on instead of focusing on the food issue. But the theory of displacement did not really make sense to him. "If that's what Dr. K. thinks, why hasn't he told me himself?" he asked. She had been precipitate to no purpose. Pete agreed, however, that it would be well for him to make advances to girls. He wanted to know how to attract them.

"I'll give you some tips," she said.

"For one thing," she explained, "they like to feel they are pleasing. So, they like to hear what it is about them that you find pleasing."

"What is it for them," he asked, "an ego trip?"

"I don't mean that you should develop a line," she laughed, "but try to express your sincere feelings of appreciation. Like: 'I like your smile,' if that is the case; or: 'I like your sense of humor.' You can say that sort of thing even in the presence of other people. As you get to know someone better, you can go by stages to more intimate expressions: 'Your freckles are cute.' Or later on you might say: 'I like the way your blue jeans hang on your hips.' And so forth. Eventually, when it's sincere, you'll be whispering sweet nothings."

"But my friends say that's not the way to act; that's not cool."

"Don't believe everything your friends tell you, Pete. You can't trust everybody. For one thing, they don't *know*; they're inexperienced too. For another, they're self-interested—unless you have a

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very close friend you can trust to be thinking of your best interest."

Pete asked how you can know whom to trust. "Someone of intelligence, first of all," she suggested. "And also maybe someone who has nothing to gain by your following his advice." According to this criterion, she considered, received authority is not always benign; one must learn to be skeptical. But she did not pass the thought on to Pete.

PETE was envious of his little brother's buoyant spirits.

"I remember how it felt to be completely absorbed in the moment," he said. "I'll never be carefree and happy like that again."

"He's still in the Garden of Eden," Pete's mother said. "As you become more aware, you develop a sense of responsibility. But that doesn't mean you have to be oppressed all the time; you can still play."

Pete looked at Andy with narrowed eyes. "Some day you'll be an adolescent," he said menacingly.

"What's that?" Andy asked with apprehension.

"That's what *I* am!" Pete snarled.

"YOU could teach the children to *regulate* rather than eliminate," Dr. K. was saying.

Years before, despairing of winning the battle, she had disposed of the family TV. She had lived to hear the children thank her for it, but at the time it had been for them an uncomfortable shock.

"It is not necessary to keep threats out of the house," Dr. K. goes on. "You could limit Andy's cookies to two or three at a time—or whatever quantity you think reasonable."

(As an antidote to Andy's pudginess, their pediatrician had advised: If he's really hungry between meals, he'll be satisfied with an apple.)

On her way home she bought some cookies, the first in a long while. When he came home from school, Andy was surprised to see them. "We're going to have these only two at a time," she explained, decreeing the more modest portion in case of later pleadings. "Two after school and two after dinner."

That evening, Andy solemnly explained the new regulation to his father. "She says you can have only two after dinner."

In the days after that, Andy came home from school asking, "Where are my only twos?" A few hours later he would cajole, "Do you have any more two-at-a-times?"

Before her next appointment, she had abandoned the project.

"Andy seemed to be mocking me," she apologizes to Dr. K. "I began to think it was silly. It is at such times that I feel I am really one of the children, only playing at being one of the grown-ups."

Dr. K. looks stern and serious. "I don't think he was mocking you. I think he was telling you he doesn't feel comfortable with himself."

MAKING college applications and visiting campuses had been a travesty. At the end of long-distance trips to Maine and Vermont, Pete's overriding concern was to get back in time for a swim. He allowed no time for looking around. He was adamant that he would not be pressured into going to school the next year.

"Just go through the motions of applying," his mother said. "If you're accepted, you can ask for deferred enrollment." She considered it a triumph when three applications and interviews were completed by the deadline.

For the last term of high-school English, Pete signed up for a course in semantics. His teacher ignored the assigned text and gave a watered-down course in Silva Mind Control. Pete believed it would help his concentration problems and, even, help to keep him free of disease. He also took up Transcendental Meditation which he practiced for an hour daily, convinced that it lowered his tension level. As winter gave way to spring, his ability to do schoolwork, at least, did improve.

Pete and his parents were at odds, argued heatedly about the merits of his strict physical regimen. Irritating eccentricities aside, his father feared that Pete's meager intake of food retarded his growth. The constant atmosphere of conflict that arose from this disagreement was disturbing to all of them.

His mother tried to impress Pete with a news item about a quadriplegic woman's efforts to gain custody of her illegitimate baby by diapering, dressing, and washing the child—in a courtroom performance—with her tongue. "Anyone would have to admire such a testimony to ingenuity and the human spirit," she said, "but if any woman with the normal use of her two hands decided to adopt this extreme mode, you would have to say she was crazy. For a seventeen-year-old boy to adopt so rigidly a recommended diet for a sixty-year-old man is pretty much the same thing."

Pete had read that it is important to start young, but he conceded the point about inappropriate heroics.

DR. K. does not agree that Pete's diet may be physically harmful; he believes that, while nutritional benefits are doubtful, the psychological cost is too great. He arranges, however, for advice from a gastroenterologist on dealing with the digestive pain.

Except for a stricture against eating before retiring, Pete refused to follow any of the recommendations. He was philosophically opposed to, would not take antacids or submit to fluoroscopic X-rays. Distressed by his distress, his mother had a sympathetic attack and learned something helpful to Pete: warmth, kneading, a calm expectation that it would pass—would not last forever—made the

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pain manageable. Thereafter, Pete's attacks were only occasional and he waited out the pain with a new equanimity.

Pete's father grew increasingly irate as he convinced himself that the boy's systematic undereating was stunting his physical growth. His mother promoted a solution: if Pete's growth or well-being, as determined by bone-age studies and a professional nutritionist, seem impaired by his diet, Pete will follow recommended alterations; if his growth is unaffected and his diet seems nutritionally adequate, his father will get off his back.

On the way to the hospital for the bone X-rays, Pete knew he was being carried to his doom. He had read in a book from the Silva Mind Control course that cancer can be psychosomatic.

"I'm going to get cancer just because I think I'm going to get it!" They couldn't print it in a book, could they, if it wasn't true?

He and his mother argued unpleasantly throughout the drive until, exasperated, she denounced him for his lack of critical powers.

ACCORDING to the expert evaluations, Pete is fully grown at five feet, two inches. Moreover, his growth spurt occurred at the age of twelve—before he began the restricted diet, and was unaffected by it. The physician-nutritionist rates his diet adequate, if not superior. His father must bow to science. Pete must accustom himself to the finality of his height.

"It makes very little difference to a man of forty what his height is," the endocrinologist said.

"True," Pete's mother replied, "but whatever compensations have been made are part of the personality by then nevertheless."

"You mean," the doctor considered, "like always owning a large dog."

The possibility of such a benign adaptation was reassuring. Pete himself quickly put anguish away and settled down to the reality: it was not so bad as deformity, dysfunction, obesity, or even garden-variety ugliness; he had all his faculties, was well-built, and had a cute face. So much that is intolerable in life just requires getting used to unwelcome surprise.

PETE'S sister, Dee, brought a friend home from college for part of their spring vacation. Pete had been disagreeable—silent and sullen—since their arrival in the midst of his dinner the night before. This evening, there was to be a special dinner in celebration of Dee's birthday. Now, Pete was getting his lunch and aggressively interfering with his mother's preparations in the kitchen.

"I hope you're going to be pleasant during the birthday dinner tonight," she said.

"I can't be pleasant if I don't feel that way," he said. "I'm not going to fake."

"Why not?" she asked. "Toni's a lovely girl. You're not apt to meet someone so interesting every day. I'll make a serving of crabmeat without the sauce so you can eat it. And there will be salad. No one will notice you eat differently."

"I'm mad, so I'm gonna show it," Pete snarled.

"Well, if you can't make up your mind to be amiable, I'd rather you stayed away. I'll explain to Toni that you're mentally unbalanced and we try not to hold it against you."

Pete left on his bike after that. Later he phoned.

"Listen, Mom. I've been thinking. I'll be there for dinner, but don't fix anything different for me."

"I don't mind. It wouldn't be a lot of trouble."

"No. I'll eat what everyone else eats."

Pete was charming throughout dinner. He conversed for a while in French with Toni and asked surprising, informed questions about her native Greece. He seemed vivacious, cultivated, sparkling. The very flower of youth.

PETE'S mother often advised him from her own experience: physical discomfort of a chronic nature is best dealt with by engaging in pleasurable, distracting activity—but not to the point of exhaustion. The difficulty is to learn moderation and realistic limits. There is merit in pretense, putting on a good act; letting it all hang out makes other people uncomfortable, unhappy to no purpose, and it does Pete himself no lasting good.

"But," she said, "you can let it all hang out with Dr. K. and me; we can take it."

"Pretending can get to be a habit, you know," Pete protested. "You can get to just pretend with everyone."

"Not in an unguarded relationship like yours," Dr. K. later assures her.

WAITING for Dr. K., Pete's mother leafs through a book of color photographs of the Far West.

"That's the sort of spectacle Pete will be seeing this summer," the doctor remarks as he settles into his chair. "Will he take a camera on the bike trip?"

"Oh yes. But his main interest is to surmount the physical challenge," she explains. "Also, to put himself in a situation—for a change—where what is required is congenial to him. Happiness is having to do what you want to do."

Dr. K.'s expression becomes grave. "It is wanting to do what you have to do," he corrects.

"Either way," she defends, "it's the *point* where desire and obligation coincide."

"Finding romance in conquering nature seems to be a strictly male thing," she goes on. "It's hard for me to imagine wanting to cross the ocean in a rowboat or climb Mount Everest."

"Women do that sort of thing too," the doctor objects.

"Well, they accompany the men. And they don't write adventure stories about the sea and the like as men do."

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Dr. K. points his index finger to the ceiling. "What about *The Bobbsey Twins*?" he asks brightly.

"It's good to see you," he says at departure this day. She thinks: he was happy to see me, I was happy to come; obligation and desire coincided.

PETE's maimed bicycle has been replaced with a superior model. While he is away on his summer odyssey, his parents continue their regular meetings with Dr. K. Pete's father is beginning to chafe at the expense and inconvenience. He feels no need of his own to air concerns. Pete's mother feels she has supplied enough information about Pete's past.

"I seem to have run out of things to say. Is there anything you want to know?" she asks Dr. K. one day.

"Anything that has impact on you has impact on Pete," he says. "How does it make you feel to find yourself in this weakened condition?"

"It makes me anxious."

"Doesn't it make you angry?"

"It did. More angry than ever before in my life," she says. She thinks: *the instant burst of clamor that she made would make milch the eyes of heaven and passion in the gods.*

"But I had my ways of coping with it," she continues. "You don't go on living with such anger—you'd go crazy."

A look of consternation passes over the doctor's face, but he does not probe further. His passivity seems perplexing to her, but welcome. (Her lawyer has advised her: "Let me say this, I wouldn't tell any doctor that you're suing another. He might think you're litigious, d'ya know what I mean?")

SHE said to her friend, "The analyst told me, sex isn't the most important thing in life. I was in my twenties at the time and he was in his forties."

"It's only the second most important," her friend said.

They strolled on in silence for a while.

"Jenny, what *is* the most important thing in life?" she then asked.

Turning first to face her full-on, Jenny answered solemnly, "Food."

"I suppose," Pete's mother reflected, "if you cross a sensual woman with a rabbinical man you are very likely to get anorexic children."

PETE returned from his trip in high spirits. During the six weeks away, there were some hilarious, carefree moments and he had made a couple of friends. He survived, only mildly discontented, the constant use of pot, junk food, and—on the part of some—sexual license. He was still systematically undereating, overly tense.

"I don't understand what my friends see in getting drunk in the back seats of cars," Pete said to his mother one day.

"Maybe it gives them the courage to do what they wouldn't do otherwise," she suggested.

"What's fun about getting sick?" he persisted.

"It's not. But necking in the back seat of cars *is* fun."

"Mom, the great authority!" Pete said.

"I'm no authority, but I've done it both ways and, in my experience, without booze is better," she said.

"PETE needs to be irreproachably good; he cannot be a bad boy," Dr. K. reiterates. "He doesn't need to do these things all the time, but he could be free to try them, to experiment. I think he treasures his conversations with you."

Embarrassed by the tribute, she says, "He *treasures* his conversations with his dad, too."

ON A golden Sunday in September, Pete planned to cycle the fifty miles to a popular county fair. His parents agreed to start out by car to meet him after he would phone to say he had arrived.

He left at eight in the morning, estimating five or six hours for the distance to be covered. At four o'clock, when he still had not called, they nervously started out anyway, thinking they would overtake Pete on the road or find him at the fairgrounds. If they waited longer, they would arrive too late for Andy to see the events.

Forty minutes of driving brought them to a small parking lot at the entrance to the fairgrounds. The walk would have been too long for Pete's mother. Luckily, the attendant directed them to a bigger parking area close to the gate. She had not seen a young boy on a bicycle.

As they drove through the gates, Pete's mother recognized their error. There was an ocean of parked cars and hundreds of thousands of people jamming the grounds. They should not have left home without a definite meeting place; they would never find Pete here in this mob.

A police guard directed them to the loudspeaker housing at the grandstand. Pete was paged three times but, after thirty minutes, the show was on and they couldn't continue to page. Andy and his dad set off for the crowded Midway to look for Pete. "I can see this is going to be a worry day, not a fun day," Andy complained.

Remaining at the grandstand, Pete's mother kept her eyes fixed on the only entrance to the show. If Pete wasn't on the Midway, maybe he would come to see the show. The sun was going down. She was chilled, and already almost exhausted.

In a half-hour, Ben and Andy returned. They decided to check again at the animal and farm exhibits while she was to stay posted at the Grange Hall, which had a broad view of the entrance area and was near a phone. She had called home three times already to see if Pete's sister had heard from

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him. It was now past six o'clock. She was cold, tired, hungry, and frightened.

She caught sight of the top of his head, bobbing up and down as it moved along the spaces between the vertical forms of the milling crowd. She jumped up from the seat and ran out of the shelter, calling his name, catching him up. He fell into her outstretched hands—a small, frail, shivering, anxious little boy.

"Pete!"

"Mom! I'm freezing."

Their relief was transcendent. They stowed his bike in the station wagon and she led him to the shelter, where she pressed her thin sweater on him and they waited for the others to return. Pete had known they were there somewhere—the attendant at the lower area had remembered their car, their asking about a boy with a bicycle. He had hesitated over the three-dollar entry charge, had decided to ride on into town to look for a phone. The extra cycling had used up an hour more. When at last he came to the gate and saw their car, he told the guards he was lost, his family was inside, he didn't know where. He was directed to the police station on the grounds, where they had not thought to check. He did not hear his name paged, but he knew they wouldn't leave without him.

On the ride home, Pete's father sat at the driver's wheel—silent with fury—while his mother fretted: were they not on the verge of leaving him, for want of knowing what else to do, in the hope of finding him on the road? What would have happened, as it grew dark, if Pete had not answered their paging? Would they have thought of appealing at the police station? She wasn't sure. It seemed to her a wonder that in the midst of that roving horde, from such a distance, she had recognized the merest crest of an anonymous head—by the wiry hair, by the slight height—as it bobbed in and out of the spaces: a mother's fierce, concentrated protectiveness. At the least, he would have caught pneumonia in his short-sleeved shirt, pedaling home for hours in the autumn dark. She was drained of every feeling except awe, and fear—because he took the marvel for granted, saying, "There's no reason to worry; these things always come out all right."

"WHAT does Dr. K. really do?" Pete asked. After the long summer break and with college classes soon to begin, he was no longer enthusiastic about meeting appointments.

"Well," his mother answered, "it *is* rather mysterious. I think he helps us to sort things out, be more objective when we might go off half-cocked. And he's soothing too, don't you feel?"

"What do you think he's like in real life?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, except he does seem immensely intelligent. You can't put that on and off. I should hate to talk to someone who doesn't seem to get the point, wouldn't you?"

"He makes me think about what I do and why I do it. I never used to pay any attention."

"Well, that's a lot!" Pete's mother said.

Actually, she did have a few notions of Dr. K. in "real life." She knew he had been a pediatrician, that he had practically an army of children; he was married to a practicing lawyer, and he was crazy about tennis. She had met him a few times in the small grocery store where she marketed daily. He shopped briskly, from a list, and paused to greet her with seeming delight, not sharing her sense of awkwardness. (If he was going to appear constantly on the commons, like any ordinary priest of the confessional, she would prefer that their *tête-à-tête* took place with eyes mutually averted: classical couch or curtained booth would serve equally well. For her, a disembodied mysteriousness facilitated therapeutic process.) He was slight and wiry with a very high forehead and, she thought, a somewhat birdlike appearance. His hands were small and fluttery. He attended solicitously to her small preferences and requirements for physical ease: was the room temperature comfortable, the musical background unintrusive, the coffee sweetened to her taste? He put her in mind of those gentle, nurturing Arapesh men who tend the children and the hearth while their more sturdy women go off to work the fields.

Early on, he had asked her where she went to graduate school, and she had answered evasively, "Philadelphia." (She felt apologetic about her limited training, as if graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Ann Arbor obligated her to do better than she had.)

"Philadelphia," he repeated, and let it pass.

"Our home town," she said, as if to explain.

A year later he named a doctor she knew in another place where their family had lived for a while. "Did you train there?" she asked in surprise.

"No," he answered. "Boston."

He was paying her back in coin, but it seemed sufficient designation: she was sure he meant Harvard.

PETE'S mother says to Dr. K., "Whether Pete's aberration is a devious expression of thwarted instinct, as you conceive it, or a rational approach to disease prevention, as he sees it—he is not about to give it up. He is still obsessed with nourishing himself properly, though his diet has expanded and become more automatic."

"But it is *not* a rational approach," Dr. K. insists. "It is not worth the price in tension and isolation to try to insure a long, disease-free life. There is the old joke about a man who was told if he avoided women, drink, dietary excess, and so on he would live a long time and he replied, 'What for?' "

"Well, it probably depends on your experience of disease. Most people would be willing to forgo

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white bread if they knew it would spare them cancer."

"But heart disease and high blood pressure have always been diseases of old age; it is not rational to believe they can be avoided by diet and exercise."

"But, isn't it true, there used to be less of it? Of course, more people succumbed to polio and pneumonia, and maybe those who managed to survive the plague had hardier constitutions to begin with, were less apt to develop degenerative diseases too."

"Or better luck," Dr. K. amends. "When *was* the Black Plague, do you know—in the 16th century?"

"Not so late," she replies, surprised by the question. Does he seek to verify that she herself is rational, oriented to the reality of time? "There were many plagues," she recites, "but the so-called Black Death was in the 14th century."

LIVING at home, in order to avoid the compulsory freshman meal plan, Pete began attending classes, cycling each day to the college campus. Still worrying the existential questions, he encountered—for the first time—formal philosophy. He was enchanted. In a few weeks, he was anxious to quit Dr. K. He was no longer last week's disciple of Socrates, seeking knowledge of the Good; he was now a Determinist—unable to affect the outcome of things: it is all fixed ahead of time, he can have control over no part of his fate.

"You can't have absolute control," his mother conceded. "Chance or luck will always enter in, in spite of all one's planning for contingencies. But the more you know of causes and possible effects, the more you can choose wisely."

"I don't believe in superstition any more," Pete said scornfully; "all that stuff about operating according to Murphy's Law."

"But that was mostly a joke," his mother said. "It was a joke to pretend that we should act as if an unwanted outcome was bound to occur: that sort of pessimism *is* determinism. But it's sensible to act as if an unwanted possibility *may* occur and to plan for that contingency."

"Well, anyway, I don't want to waste my time seeing the doctor any more. Lately, when I get in there, I can't even remember what my problem is!"

Pete met his next appointments with growing reluctance. He asked, for the first time, about the amount of expense involved. "I can't believe you would do this!" he shrieked, when he had gained an approximate knowledge. Since returning from his trip, he had been reading to Dr. K. from his travel diary, displaying his new schoolbooks, avoiding any talk of "problems." In a recent session, he had begun a discussion of the medical malpractice issue.

"It is almost never justified," the doctor told him.

"What about in a case like Dr. Nork?" Pete had countered, but Dr. K. knew nothing of it. Pete gave an account of the news story he had read about the mass mutilations.

"Oh well, that's a scandal!" Dr. K. had exclaimed.

How lacking in the daintier sense, Pete's mother thought: if only one patient was wantonly butchered, it wasn't a scandal? *En masse*, do people experience more pain and anguish than individually? The multiple instances serve to draw attention; if no one notices, is there nothing scandalous? Her mind ranted.

"I wouldn't want you to talk to Dr. K. about what happened to me," she said to Pete.

"No, I wouldn't," he said. "But I'm going to pursue the general question with him. I want to see what he has to say."

She thought it was a tricky matter and felt relief when Pete said nothing more about it.

AT LAST, Pete grows adamant: he needs to concentrate on schoolwork; contemplating his "problem" is a distraction, he will not continue his appointments.

Dr. K. is stern. He will accept Pete's "autonomous decision"; he can accept that Pete does not want, at this point, the discomfort and consequent distraction from his studies that therapy entails, but he cannot accept that Pete cannot spare the hour a week that appointments require.

Pete thinks this is begging the question: it is the brooding between visits that distracts him, not the appointment itself. Perhaps he will brood anyway—and spin his wheels without the doctor. In that case, he is assured, the door will be open to his resuming.

"How do you feel about continuing?" Dr. K. asks Pete's mother. Ben has already been dismissed, unless Pete should return to therapy.

"Do you think it would be helpful?" she asks.

"I don't think I've seen the last of Pete. You're a very special kind of observer; you can keep me informed."

"Yeah, I'm his mother."

"I mean, you think about these things."

"I have the time."

"Whatever the apology is . . ." says Dr. K. "Is every other week all right?"

"You're the doctor."

"I think it will be all right."

SHE usually declined the cup of coffee he solicitously offered, but this seems a special occasion—one worthy of festivity: their meeting is at a different time and place than usual and she knows (although Dr. K. does not) that it will be their last.

While they await the water's bubbling boil, the doctor concerns himself with her comfort. "Would you like something for your feet? Do you like to

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put your feet up?" At last he carries from the adjoining room two cups steaming with instant coffee.

"Oh," she exclaims, "where did you get that mug? It's just like the one I drink my coffee from every morning! Except yours is pink inside; mine is white."

"You noticed that. Did you really notice that! How observant you are."

"I used to have four, but now I only have one. I'm very put out if anyone else takes it in the morning."

"I've had this a long time. See where the handle was broken and I've patched it, not well. Let me give you this one."

"Oh no, I couldn't do that. But it is exactly the same. I think it is just the right size for a morning cup of coffee."

"Yes, it does have a nice heft to it."

"Yes, well. . . ." She begins to feel discomfited: she is embarrassed by the exaltation of her unremarkable observations, and this is expensive chitchat.

Dr. K. has been crooning to her about the cup, wooing her as he would a child ("What do you have in your schoolbag today?"), offering her, since the opportunity arose, a tangible token of himself to take away with her—preferably something that can be touched and handled, a point of closeness and contact, a physical bond. On his first visit to the doctor, Pete had picked up a piece of modeling clay that lay at hand for the susceptible. He and Dr. K. had talked about the clay and Pete was invited to take it home. How many little pieces of himself there must be scattered around the county, she thinks. But she has come today not to begin but to terminate.

Now she comes swiftly to the point: she hopes that Pete will not need to return to treatment, since they could not support the financial strain indefinitely. (It is education of a sort, she thinks, but—dollar for dollar—not equivalent to a year at Harvard.) Continuing her visits might cast doubt on her confidence in Pete or he might feel, unhappily, that they talked about him.

Dr. K. agrees. "The focus of tension was Pete. It does not seem reasonable to continue without him. Of course, if necessity should arise, I will be available."

"I feel optimistic about Pete," she says. "The children are in flux, Doctor. Feelings come and go; nothing is fixed—except the residue of neurologic illness."

None of them had pressed for scrutiny of this delicate issue: what had been the impact on the vulnerable, ambivalent adolescent of his mother's sudden, extreme—and then protracted—disarray? What net of narcissistic blow, protective repudiation, guilty attribution of cause and effect had caught and held him as he already flailed in a new, dark turbulence of emotion? The inexorable demon of little Andy's imagination that—for years—had lurked in wait for him in empty rooms was suddenly, surprisingly, routed in her many weeks of illness: merely because the actual separation proved not so awful as the feared? Or was it as much that the omnipotent ("He has magic powers!"), tireless menace ("He wants to get me!") had transcended his fearsome wishes and, in her absence, taken very good care of Andy indeed? For Pete, there had been a lifetime of lenient sympathy before, at this crisis point, an open expression of paternal wrath. But these were hard, deep mysteries and the need to consider them not even clear.

"Ben and I haven't moved much from our original positions," she confesses to Dr. K. "He still thinks I'm overly indulgent and I think he's hypercritical. I wish we had some guideline for our behavior toward Pete in the future."

"It's good to be close, but not too close. Not too anything," Dr. K. responds. "Pete's a nice boy," he says, rising. "I like him."

"Oh, I like him too!" she replies with enthusiasm.

Dr. K. laughs.

"Well, Doctor," she says, "you leave us a bit stronger than you found us. That's not *nothing*."

"It's nice to hear that."

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

IT WAS good to see the end of the enormous monthly bills for psychiatric consultations. To Ben and Pete, it was also a relief not to have to go.

"He's a wonderful man," Ben had said, the instant he was set free.

"He's very nice, but he does it for money," Pete observed. "His interest in me lasts as long as he's paid. That's not the case with my parents." To Pete, now, Dr. K. did not seem an object of love, trust, and intimacy but—like a prostitute—a transient object of reciprocal exploitation.

Although hardly anything could seem to her worth such sums, Pete's mother had enjoyed—would even miss—her visits to Dr. K. The lessons, however, remained obscure: It is no good to be too good (it spoils the fun?). It is no good to be too anything (not too intimate or too virtuous—not too talented or too competent, either?). Moderation in all things (Golden Mediocrity is what we should strive for—the goal of the mental-health movement as well as the media?) Never mind, Dr. K. was very sweet and would do anything he could to help—as long as he was paid $1.40 a minute. What friends and relatives once did for each other now required a professional. For that one year, when it had seemed an absolute necessity, they had been able to buy a friend. (Friend, counselor, fellow man—sell me your ear!) Each time, she had met with him joyfully; now they all parted from him in the same spirit.

One evening near the end of the fall college term,

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Ben and Andy went to the basement for a game of ping-pong. As was often the case, crumbs from Pete's meal preparations littered one corner of the table. To Ben, it was not just an inconvenient mess; it was an intolerable residue of relentless, aberrant behavior. In a nasty tone, he demanded of Pete, "Clean up this mess right now!" Something rude and defiant in Pete's reply further provoked his father to deliver a heavy blow that landed on the side of his head. They were both shocked by the violence of the reaction; both felt that the provocation would not be readily forgiven.

"Things will never be the same between me and Dad," Pete said to his mother.

We all harm each other willy-nilly, she knew, and more often than not the wounds healed; but parents pay heavily for (even small) inadvertencies. "You made Dad mad at himself," she said. "That's harder to bear and get over than anger at another person."

Pete made arrangements to move onto campus at the start of the new term. He said it would be hard to bike to classes on snowy mornings, and the travel time could be better used for studying and making new friends. Living in the dormitory would make socializing easier too. "I've been living like a monk," he said.

("It is not simply self-denial," Dr. K. had said to her. "You called it mortifying the flesh—there *is* in it some monkish attitude of devotion.")

His monkishness would go intact—along with all his gear—to a new cell, but it was time for Pete to move on, and he was ready.

THE sense of obligation to be happy can be one of the heaviest—and needless—burdens of youth. Parents seem so displeased, so discouraged by their child's discontent that it is—to the child—as if unhappiness is not allowed. (Everyone has heard, a good child is a happy child, or the other way around.) Assessing the authentic state of being can become a moral evaluation. And so, in youth, the question is regarded with great seriousness: Am I happy? By middle age, when it is not so much bad form to *be* unhappy as to show it, we more readily accept the right to go on living although unhappy and discharge our obligation to others by trying to seem cheerful. With practice, we learn to live with depression.

In another, more innocent, era Pete might not have been so crazily unhappy. There would have been plenty of red-cheeked boys of about his own age to join in building igloos of snow or, in summer, sleeping out under the stars. Buttered popcorn and candied apples would have nearly defined the limits of junk food; there would have been no concern for additives to spoil the simple pleasure. But, in that other time, he might have feared promiscuous contact with uncombatable organisms, borne about on ordinary household currents, almost visible to the imagination in the slanting beams of dust in a sunny parlor. It was true that Pete was conscientious, disdainful of "goof-offs" and hedonists; it was not equally true that he was not playful. His notions of frolic were anachronistic and, for that reason, idiosyncratic. It could be said, the times were out of joint and he was a casualty of the culture.

PETE's mother enclosed a magazine cartoon with her note to Dr. K. It showed a young boy standing, with an expression of diabolic satisfaction, behind the chair of his seated mother who wore an air of wounded disappointment. The caption read, simply: Bad Boy. Her note said:

> The enclosed cartoon makes the point rather neatly, don't you agree? Here is also a report on recent developments: Pete's study of philosophy seemed to be good for his metaphysical unrest. His new driver's license stands for age-adequacy, I suppose, but is otherwise useless since he moved onto campus for the winter term. There, he is able to work very hard, with great enthusiasm for all his subjects. He is doing something called "taking forfeit points" for the wrestling team but, apart from swimming, does not feel free to pursue other activities of interest to him. He wishes academic competence came more easily to him and that he had time to cultivate more intimate friendships. Our expectation is: all in good time. Ben, who makes all necessary deliveries to the dorm, says he has put on weight and looks great. He has even grown an inch. My long-range hope is for some interesting project —away from home—this summer.

At summer recess, longer intimacy would disclose some whitewashing in that account. The signs of misery had thoroughly faded, but the inflexible routine of feeding and exercise consumed Pete's hours inordinately. Who was to say if isolation from the age group was cause or effect, motive or consequence? At least they would all settle in, absorb the shock of the initially intolerable, so that the strange and restrictive began to seem natural and comfortable. Cheerfulness was again possible. Adaptation was achieved: a combination of recovery and getting used to hanging.

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The English Sickness

Pearl K. Bell

IF ONE reflects on "the great tradition" of the English novel (using F. R. Leavis's term more generously than he would approve), it is evident that the quality of British fiction in the 1970's has deteriorated into the great traduction. Even if one limits the range of critical reference to the post-Lawrence generations, it is dismally clear that the extraordinary mine of wit, intelligence, and stylistic command that enriched the English novel from the mid-1930's until about a decade after World War II—the flourishing years of Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Joyce Cary, Christopher Isherwood, George Orwell, Anthony Powell, and the young Kingsley Amis who wrote *Lucky Jim*—is by now more exhausted than the British Treasury. The best, as Yeats wrote, lack all conviction, and the worst are full of passionate intensity.

It is a curious and piquant fact, not easily explained, that the dominant, and certainly the most prolific, writers of fiction in Britain today are women. But this cannot be attributed simply to the new feminism. Iris Murdoch, Margaret Drabble, Doris Lessing, Beryl Bainbridge, Fay Weldon, *et al.* are not just the British opposite numbers of Lois Gould, Erica Jong, and the rest of that busy battalion of American women novelists who have been flooding the market with their crudely polemical morality tales of liberation. For one thing, these industrious Englishwomen are more subtle and cultivated, and they are not aggressively committed to a collective feminist ideology, though feminist attitudes and anxieties have certainly had a crucial influence on their work. Yet it is also true that they seem unwilling or unable to confront that formidable subject, society, which engaged the epic energy of most Victorian and Edwardian novelists, including women like Mrs. Gaskell and, at a much higher level, George Eliot.

In the 20th century, women novelists have on the whole been reluctant to address themselves to the bewildering chaos of contemporary social experience and political disorder, and have been more exclusively preoccupied with the psychological intricacies of individual temperament and behavior. If it is permissible to say that this preference for the private and the singular over the public and the social has traditionally been characteristic of women novelists, and if writers of both sexes today feel that public upheaval is oppressive, confusing, and unmanageable as a subject of literature, then the ascendancy of female novelists is not surprising. But this endemic disaffection of novelists with the texture and tensions of the large-scale social condition has seriously impoverished British fiction. Though Leavis's criteria of intellectual weight and moral earnestness are too stern and exclude too much from the great tradition, it is nonetheless true that a wholesale indifference to the moral interplay of man and society can lead to a self-ordained narrowness of perspective, interest, and observation. All those elegantly shaped but essentially trivial intuitions and insights just do not amount to much in the way of art or thought.

Two new novels, by Margaret Drabble and John Fowles, seem to promise a renewed determination on the part of British writers to expand their constricted horizons. Margaret Drabble plainly feels dissatisfied with the kind of narrow-gauge scrutiny that has pervaded most of her seven previous novels. In her new book, *The Ice Age*,* she has finally wriggled out of that tight corset of female self-absorption, and boldly undertaken a sober diagnosis of *le mal anglais*, that seemingly mysterious illness which obsesses and frightens not only its victims but the rest of the Western world as well.

How could England have got itself into such an unholy mess, she asks, "sliding, sinking, shabby, dirty, lazy, inefficient, dangerous, in its death-throes, worn out, clapped out, occasionally lashing out"? Miss Drabble announces her purpose with unmistakable clarity by coupling two famous visions of Britain as the novel's epigraph—Milton's proudly magisterial description of Puritan England, in the *Areopagitica*, as "a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks," and Wordsworth's bitter invocation of Milton, a century and a half later: "Thou shouldst be living at this hour/ England hath need of thee: she is a fen/Of stagnant waters. . . ." To these contrasting historical images, Margaret Drabble, almost two centuries after Wordsworth, now adds her lamentation upon the 1970's. "Terrible things" are happening to England, the spirit has gone out of the country, and it is poisoned with "alarm, panic, and despondency."

In order to give strong dramatic weight to her sense of the way public disaster and private woe feed parasitically upon each other in England today, Miss Drabble assembles a multiple portrait of pain, loss, and catastrophe. And, defying the persuasions of fashion, she centers her story upon a likable and decent man, not upon an aggrieved woman ticking off her complaints against unlikable and indecent men. At the forefront is Anthony Keating, the son of an Anglican vicar, an Oxford graduate with a wasted gift for songwriting. Divorced, the father of four children,

PEARL K. BELL's *reviews of contemporary fiction appear regularly in these pages.*

* Knopf, 295 pp., $8.95.

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Keating had worked for some discontented years in BBC television, but he hungered for bigger and more exciting game. When the chance arose through the Old Boy network, he plunged into the high-rolling and corrupt world of speculative real estate that was booming in the 1960's. But now the bottom has dropped out of the market, he has only barely recovered from a heart attack, and he is in danger of losing the beautiful old house he recently acquired—mortgaged to the hilt—in the Yorkshire countryside.

His mistress, Alison Murray, who gave up a successful career as an actress to care for a daughter born with cerebral palsy, has flown to a Balkan Communist backwater, where an older daughter, a flower-child radical and surly bitch, has been jailed for killing two people in an automobile accident. One of Keating's business partners, convicted of fraud, is also in jail, and Alison's old friend Kitty Friedmann has lost her husband and her right foot because the IRA tossed a bomb into a Mayfair restaurant. Since no social portrait of England is complete without its dogs, Miss Drabble includes a few pointedly symbolic mutts: one mangy creature is abandoned, another shot, and a third, its side ripped away by a car, lopes stoically toward its death through the insane traffic in a newly modernized Yorkshire town.

Like an ambitious student who has swotted hard for her grades, Miss Drabble indulges in some strenuous demonstrations of how well prepared she is to analyze the getting and spending that has laid waste England's powers, how much she has managed to learn about economics, real-estate law, banking, property rights, inheritance and wills, leaseholds and freeholds. Unfortunately, she has not absorbed all this technical stuff well enough to use it clearly and easily. Exactly what caused Keating's business fiasco, for example, remains fuzzy, and one suspects that either she read the wrong texts or failed to master the right ones.

Despite her creditable ambitions in *The Ice Age,* Miss Drabble does not appear to have made up her mind about what she feels or finally means to say, cannot decide whether England will live or die, and as a result, soon loses control of the book altogether. Toward the end, she suddenly contravenes her grim vision of Britain "sliding into the shit" by dissolving all the evidence she has accumulated in a syrup of instant religion and ersatz hope. Keating, trapped in a web of accident and coincidence that even the most flagrant spinners of Victorian melodrama might have scorned, is sentenced to a long term in a Balkan prison camp, where he reads Boethius, looks out for rare birds, and, the vicar's son come full circle, undertakes to write a book about his rediscovery of God. (Miss Drabble's epigraph *might* have come from that familiar Anglican hymn: "Change and decay in all around I see;/ Oh Thou, who changest not, abide with me!") Keating's trial by fire and his religious revival, Miss Drabble would aparently have us believe, confirm some sort of faith that "Britain will recover." I have no doubt that it will. But if many English men and women confront their present danger in the irresolute manner of *The Ice Age,* the thaw is a long way off.

THOUGH Margaret Drabble fails to accomplish what she set out to do in *The Ice Age,* she should be given credit for a quality entirely absent from John Fowles's *Daniel Martin**—a healthy respect for one's limitations. Fowles has all along been one of the most cunning artificers in the business, and his contrived fiction so closely resembles the real thing that it has fooled many ordinarily cautious and serious critics into granting him the seal of incontestable authenticity. To be sure, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was an ingeniously clever and sometimes amusing sport, a "Victorian" novel that could be written only in the 1960's. But it was hardly the profound exploration of Victorian sex or the psychology of fictional character or the theoretical foundations of the novel form that many reviewers claimed it to be. Now, in *Daniel Martin,* the brilliant counterfeiter who could make fictional pinchbeck glitter like the crown jewels has become recklessly overconfident that his public will take anything he dishes out.

Nothing that has swum into his ken during Fowles's fifty-one years on this earth—no book, man, poem, animal; no blade of grass, girl, country; no woman, art, bird, bee, or flower; no film or political notion—is in this book granted the civility of silence, and nothing is allowed to remain unmentioned, unrepeated, unvindicated or unassaulted, unburdened with a mountain of significance and implication. ("Words are like leaves," Pope warned, "and where they most abound,/Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found.") Fowles is immensely well-read and much-traveled, but a lot of miscellaneous learning can be a dangerous thing. It does not take a gimlet eye to see that *Daniel Martin,* underneath its uncountable layers of quasi-philosophy and erudition, is no more than a thin and conventional reprise of the old story: boy-meets-loses-gets-girl. Since Fowles makes so many leisurely and inordinately discursive stops along the rocky road to love, both boy and girl are somewhat long in the tooth by the time Daniel Martin and Jane Mallory at long last join lives forever, but the happy ending is hardly worth the wait.

Fowles's eponymous hero, like Miss Drabble's Keating, is the son of an Anglican vicar, and grew up in the shadow of a church. There are other parallels: postwar Oxford, a youthful talent for songwriting, marriage to the wrong woman, and an addiction to portentous declaration. Both men feel dislocated and adrift in the contemporary world, and think of themselves self-pityingly as members of that unlucky Oxford generation which, Fowles writes, was "fatally undercut and isolated by the whole working-class, anti-university shift in the English theater and the novel. . . . All this reduced us to watching and bitching . . . to climbing on whatever cultural or professional bandwagon came to hand, accepting the fool's gold of instant success." Keating has found (and lost) his gold in property; Dan Martin —though a cloudy sense of failure and loss hovers permanently over

* Atlantic-Little, Brown, 629 pp., $12.95.

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his head, and he feels out of touch with his "real" self, his roots, his past—has found his as a rich and famous screenwriter.

This career is interrupted, however, when Dan is abruptly summoned home from Hollywood by an old friend, a philosophy don at Oxford, from whom he has long been estranged. Because Anthony Mallory, married to the sister of Dan's former wife, is dying of cancer and wants to wipe the moral slate clean before he goes, Dan reluctantly returns to Oxford, which he has not seen since New College days, and where he quickly feels stifled by "the claustrophobia of academic life . . . privileged, unhardened by the realities of the world outside." Since Fowles must inflate every faint thought into a resounding apothegm, he adds: "That also stood for the whole of England."

There is worse to come. Jane Mallory, a troubled woman, tells Dan, in the first of some five thousand long, deep, very literary, humbly sincere and earnest conversations, that she has been unhappy in her marriage, and that something has gone very wrong with their lives, their generation, their age, century, world, values, England. Can it be, Dan muses, that he married the wrong sister all those years ago? Since Fowles has a romantic story to unfold, and cannot let his star-crossed lovers do nothing but natter for over six hundred pages, he has a lot of space to fill, and fill it he does: with country weekends, three-hour meals in London restaurants, a ten-day cruise along the Nile that seems longer than the Trans-Siberian railroad. But most of the filler is Fowles expounding his sententious opinions in an encyclopedic stream of causeries: on the art of film and the nature of screenwriting, the horrors of Los Angeles, the qualities of "Englishness," the fragmented consciousness of modern man, the joys and sorrows of sex, the secret of British imperialism, the landscape of New Mexico, the Latin names of orchids, the taste of apples, and so on.

The most "humane" cities in America, our indefatigable anthologist confides, are San Francisco, New Orleans, and Santa Fe. The English language is poetic, but the American language is just "a tool." The mediocre quality of most English and American films can be blamed on "the forced marriage between the Jewish and the Anglo-Saxon race-minds that generated so much corrupt shimmer." (This is only one instance of the covert and elaborately intellectualized anti-Semitism that crops up more than once, though of course some of Dan Martin's best friends in America are Jews.)

INTO this omnium-gatherum Fowles also tosses some big thoughts he has been thinking about Marxism and revolution. Jane, it seems, has been reading the newly resurrected hero of the European Left intelligentsia, Antonio Gramsci (who provides Fowles with his modish epigraph—"the old is dying and the new cannot be born"—as if Matthew Arnold had not said the same thing better in "Dover Beach"); she is planning to join the Communist party because university life is so smug, capitalism is so unfair, and surely it can't be wrong to dream of "an intelligent Marxist society . . . what Mao's done for China." Dan, as ever, is on the one hand skeptical and on the other sympathetic, since "I have read Marcuse." This launches the lovers into some heady dialogues about cultural hegemony, the history of Leninism, the role of the intellectual elite in Gramsci's thought, and other sexy matters, but Gramsci proves a poor aphrodisiac and the informal seminars end with nothing more than sighs and whispers.

Jane's reading includes not only Gramsci but Georg Lukács, and here the author really founders. Since Dan has not read him, Jane helpfully explains that Lukács "was a very great humanist. . . . Not very brave when the Stalinist screws were put on. Not a mad martyr *à la* Solzhenitsyn. Like most of us, really. Just wanting something better . . . inside the system. . . . I think you'd like him. He's very intelligent. Behind all the -isms."

In a less meretricious novel, one would take this cozy English domestication of Lukács as a shrewd device of characterization, but Fowles makes it plain that this is *his* view of "the great humanist." Smitten with Lukács's essays on

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Scott and Thomas Mann, Dan ruminates on "the great Hungarian critic's . . . humanist, Erasmic side . . . that current that runs through Western history as the Nile itself through Africa." This simile—an incredible vulgarization of a complex mind and political career—is followed a bit later with some anxious backtracking by Fowles's perpetual man-in-the-middle about "the cost of suppressing inequality in Eastern Europe and elsewhere."

The author's moralist-hero seems unperturbed by—or insensible to—the semantic and political oxymoron "suppressing inequality." Fowles, however, is more than pretentious and ignorant in his misrepresentation of Lukács, the tormented Hungarian aesthetician who had, until the very week before the Béla Kun revolution, opposed Bolshevism. Lukács had felt that no good could arise from an agency of evil. But in an electric moment of conversion, he made his pact with the devil and found it possible to accept the necessity of evil, even of murder, in the name of Marxism. As Franz Borkenau revealed in his book *World Communism* (1939), Lukács told a former comrade in 1921 that

> . . . lying and cheating of party members by their own leaders were admissible because Communist ethics make it the highest duty to accept the necessity of acting wickedly. This was the greatest sacrifice the revolution demanded from us. The conviction of the true Communist is that evil transforms itself into bliss through the dialectics of historical evolution.

This view of the "two truths" Lukács held to the end of his agonized life.

Even stranger, Fowles does not seem to know that in *The Magic Mountain*, Thomas Mann used Lukács as the model for the Jewish-born Jesuit Naphta, the sinister casuist defending both Marx and the Church, who tells the genuine humanist, Settembrini:

> The dictatorship of the proletariat, the politico-economic means of salvation demanded by our age . . . [is a means] of overcoming the world by mastering it. . . . The proletariat has taken up the task of Gregory the Great, his religious zeal burns within it, and, as little as he, may it withhold its hand from the shedding of blood. Its task is to strike terror into the world for the healing of the world, that man may finally achieve salvation and deliverance, and win back at length, to freedom from law and from distinction of classes, his original status as child of God.

How could Fowles have missed all this? The psychologists have a term for it—"selective inattention."

That the noble and puissant art of the English novel can sink to this level of pompous naiveté and bluster would normally be no cause for alarm—there has never been a shortage of big, bad, confused, pretentious, boring novels. But in a review of *Daniel Martin* John Gardner, a novelist who is also a literary scholar, has solemnly proclaimed that John Fowles is "the only novelist now writing in English whose works are likely to stand as literary classics—the only writer in English who has the power, range, knowledge, and wisdom of a Tolstoy or James." To equate Fowles with Tolstoy travesties the very idea of literary tradition, and only hastens the collapse of intellectual and critical responsibility.

In the fiction that deserves to be placed in the great tradition, not only is a moral and philosophical position embodied in the novel, it *is* its body, the bones and brain and heart and blood of the characters, of the story they enact, of the time and place we are told that they inhabit. This is gravely different from a novel with "a point of view"—something the writer tacks on to his invented persons and events and places in the futile hope that his label will endow them with the elusive vitality they can never possess. Trust the tale, not the teller, Lawrence wisely advised. What Margaret Drabble and John Fowles ask us to take on faith is themselves, the tellers, toying with points of view. How can we do this when their tales are dead?

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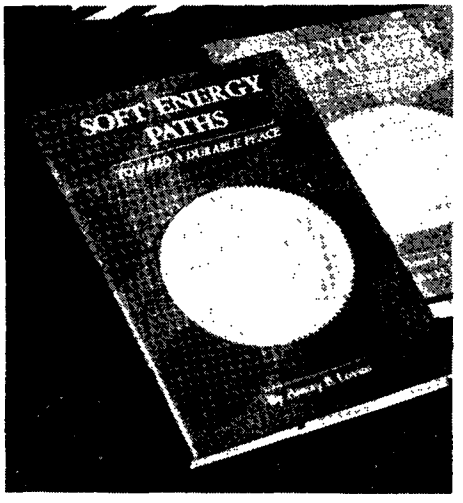

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Books in Review

The Chains of the Constitution

GOVERNMENT BY JUDICIARY: THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT. By RAOUL BERGER. *Harvard University Press. 483 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by ELLIOTT ABRAMS

PERHAPS no other legal scholar has in recent years received as much attention from the press as Raoul Berger. In 1973 and 1974, when Berger's *Executive Privilege* and *Impeachment* appeared, he was profiled in the New York *Times* and in the *Atlantic*. *Newsweek* devoted a full page to him. The reviews were all raves. His new book, *Government by Judiciary*, has already been the subject of several news stories in the *Times*, and is well on the way to becoming a significant intellectual event.

The reason for Berger's popularity in 1973 and 1974 is not hard to find. *Executive Privilege* argued, in effect, that Richard Nixon had to give up the papers he wished to withhold from public scrutiny, and *Impeachment* said, in effect, that we could throw the President out; both books were seized upon eagerly as weapons in the political struggle then taking place. What is surprising is that few of Berger's liberal fans in those days bothered to understand the implications of his analyses. "I'm a fundamentalist," Berger said in so many words, but that simply made him sound like Justice Black, another giant in the liberal pantheon. In fact, however, Berger stands far from the mainstream of modern American constitutional theory, rejecting not only the judicial activism of Earl Warren, but also the more conservative tradition of a judge like Felix Frankfurter. His analysis of the law, as Ralph K. Winter of Yale wrote in 1974, "is far more compatible with the constitutional approach of those who would have impeached Earl Warren than with that of those who would impeach Richard Nixon."

In Berger's view, the sole sources of constitutional law are the historical record and the words of the Constitution itself. He wishes, in a quotation from Jefferson which recurs several times in his new book, to "bind [men] down in the chains of the Constitution." This image is suggestive, for in Berger's eyes the Constitution *is* rather like a prison. Any attempt to break out of an ancient interpretation or definition is illicit. Our sole task is to discover the precise meaning the framers gave a passage, the "original understanding," and then to enforce it. As the late Alexander M. Bickel once described such a viewpoint:

> The Constitution is thought to embody a clear and certain yardstick by which to measure the actions of other branches of the government. The ideal function of a Justice of the Supreme Court is the mechanical application of the yardstick to such activities as are duly brought to his attention. . . . Such constitutional phrases as "Due Process of Law" or "Equal Protection of the Laws" are very much like the language in a deed, let us say, giving one title to land "in fee simple": it takes a lawyer to tell one just exactly what such fine print means, but a good lawyer can tell you, and that is that.

In *Government by Judiciary*, Berger takes as his text the Fourteenth Amendment, whose most vital phrase reads:

> No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

The Fourteenth Amendment has been the source of endless controversy since its adoption in 1868. At first, the Supreme Court refused to take up the powers which lay in its terms. In the Slaughterhouse Cases of 1873, the Court eschewed the role of protector of the civil rights of blacks—though it was these rights the Amendment was designed to guarantee. Then, as the years passed, the Amendment became the source of increasing judicial power, especially in the economic sphere. Under the theory known as "substantive due process," the Court found that the due-process clause protected liberty of contract from any interference, and struck down even wages-and-hours laws as violating the employee's right to contract freely with his employer. The clash between this view and the legislative efforts of the New Deal is well known, and "substantive due process" passed from the scene in the 1930's.

More recently, the Amendment has been the center of controversy once again, as its words have been found to offer a basis for the reapportionment cases, the school desegregation cases, and indeed almost the whole line of judicial activism associated with the Warren Court. It is the Fourteenth Amendment which, to the modern Court, applies the first ten Amendments to the states, thereby allowing the Court to control state laws in areas as varied as criminal procedure and obscenity.

To Raoul Berger, the modern use of the Fourteenth Amendment is no less execrable than the older one. He thinks *Baker* v. *Carr*, the reapportionment case, was wrongly decided, as he thinks was *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, for "the historical records all but incontrovertibly establish that the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment excluded both suffrage and segregation from its reach." Berger's analysis of the congressional debates over adoption of the Amendment leads him to the conclusion—the same

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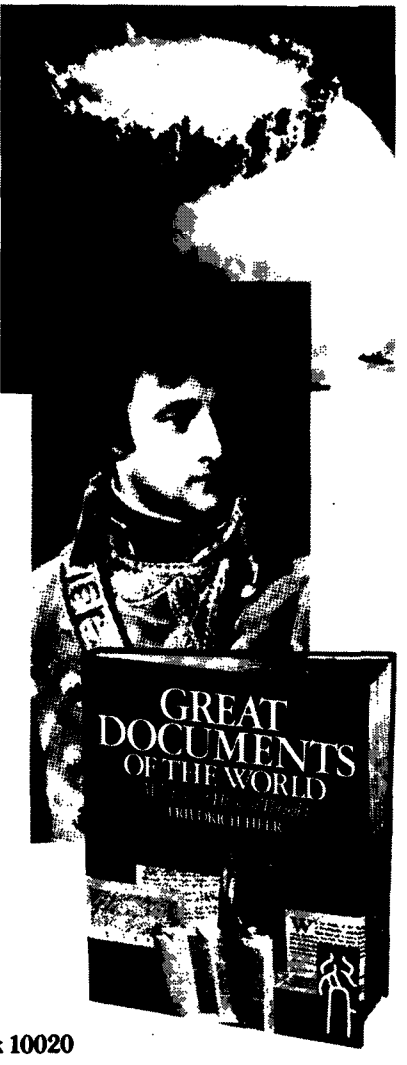

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conclusion reached by most other investigators—that Congress did not think it was outlawing segregation. But for Berger, here the matter is settled; he believes his work as a constitutional lawyer is complete once the "original understanding" is elucidated. Chief Justice Warren's brief dismissal of the historical record in the *Brown* decision—"We cannot turn the clock back to 1868"—elicits from Berger the comment that "Such conduct impels one to conclude that the Justices are become a law until themselves."

Berger does not think that rulings resulting from his own position would necessarily lead to good social policy, but it is precisely his point that social policy is left by the Constitution to the people, not the courts. His own sympathies, for example, are obviously with full racial integration, yet of the desegregation decisions he states that "I cannot bring myself to believe that a court may assume a power not granted in order to correct an end that the people were, and remain, unready to cure." Those who would subject the words of the Constitution to constant reinterpretation would, he says, "convert the 'chains of the Constitution' to ropes of sand." And the inherent danger, to Berger, is clear: "Respect for the limits on power are the essence of a democratic society; without it the entire democratic structure is undermined and the way is paved from Weimar to Hitler."

With this view, Berger cannot but oppose virtually every modern Court ruling on civil rights and civil liberties. He modestly admits that "the list of cases that would fail were the 'original understanding' honestly applied is indeed formidable." It is in fact comprehensive.

Berger shrinks from advising a widescale rollback, which would be "utterly unrealistic and probably impossible" and is "more than the Courts should undertake and more, I believe, than the American people would desire." Yet he does urge an end to busing to achieve racial balance, and an end to court administration of school systems, which he calls "government by decree." He advises "greater restraint in apportionment matters, [and] the return of the administration of local criminal, libel, and obscenity laws to the States."

However great one's appreciation of his considerable intellectual integrity, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that as a constitutional theorist, Berger is utterly inadequate. In his chronicle of American constitutional history, he gives us everything except that which is most important—an understanding of the role of the Constitution in our political system. As Robert McCloskey put it in *The American Supreme Court*, "Judicial review in its peculiar American form exists because America set up popular sovereignty and fundamental law as twin ideals and left the logical conflict between them unresolved." This conflict Berger overlooks entirely, or, to give him his due, he sees as being entirely resolved in the amendment process.

Berger's view, in fact, would seem to call for frequent amendment of the Constitution. Yet had the framers had this in mind, one wonders why they made the process so difficult. To the contrary, considering how difficult the Constitution makes it to adopt amendments, one is led to Ralph Winter's conclusion (taken, again, from his comment on Berger's earlier book):

> A written constitution with difficult amendment procedures strongly encourages the body politic to add to the document only general declarations on matters of great import, leaving room for growth and change in the light of history and the perspective afforded by a deliberate elaboration as experience grows.

There is, moreover, an inherent contradiction between Berger's notion that the immutable Constitution is all that protects our liberties and his view that the slightest change in constitutional interpretation calls for an amendment. If the document should come to be amended frequently, if it should become little more binding than mere statutes, how strong a bulwark would it remain?

Berger, then, is blind to the role played by the tension between the restraints of the Constitution and the shifting will of the people—a tension which is at the very heart of America's constitutional system, and which has much to do with its success in preserving our liberty for over two centuries. In the arduous task we set our judges, to strike a delicate balance between the duty of judgment and the duty of restraint, and in the search for what Bickel called "a rigorous general accord between judicial supremacy and democratic theory," Berger offers no assistance.

There is precedent in our constitutional history for such an approach as Berger's—the rather mechanical analysis of the historical record to find the explicit intentions of the framers. Indeed, it was well summed up in one case, in which the Supreme Court ruled:

> No one, we presume, supposes that any change in public opinion or feeling . . . should induce the court to give to the words of the Constitution a more liberal construction . . . than they were intended to bear when the instrument was framed and adopted. . . . If any of its provisions are deemed unjust, there is a mode prescribed in the instrument itself by which it may be amended; but while it remains unaltered, it must be construed now as it was understood at the time of its adoption. . . .

This passage, which seems to me a fair statement of Berger's view, is from Chief Justice Taney's opinion in *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford*, perhaps the most grievous wound ever inflicted by the Court on itself and the nation. There, the Court ruled that blacks could not be considered citizens under the Constitution, since they were not so considered when the document was written. Bickel wrote of this passage, and of the mode of constitutional interpretation it exemplifies, that "such views, when they prevail, threaten disaster to government under a written constitution." Bickel's own view was that "we do not confine our judges, we caution them." For all Berger's scholarship and integrity, he lacks the wisdom which that one phrase imparts. He sees the Constitution as a set of chains, and indeed his view would make it one.

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Vietnam Turnaround

THE UNMAKING OF A PRESIDENT: LYNDON JOHNSON AND VIETNAM. By HERBERT Y. SCHANDLER. *Princeton University Press. 419 pp. $16.50.*

Reviewed by NELSON W. POLSBY

STUDENTS of contemporary history occasionally talk themselves into canonical versions of significant current events. Sometimes these versions stand the test of time and are not much disturbed by subsequent revision—or even by revisionism. It seems unlikely, however, at least over the short run, that very many aspects of U.S. domestic and diplomatic politics surrounding the war in Vietnam will join the charmed circle of historical narratives about which everyone agrees. Tempers are still too high, nerves are still too frayed for that. Many of the people who customarily write about current history found themselves deeply engaged in this period as participants in one way or another in shaping public and elite opinion on the war and its prosecution. Moreover, at least one school of thought took the view that measured discussion of an unmitigated ongoing evil was a form of complicity in the evil itself.

This is not an atmosphere in which dispassionate historical inquiry flourishes, and so interested bystanders should be grateful for the evenhanded effort Herbert Y. Schandler—who once served in the Pentagon as a compiler of the Pentagon Papers and now works at the Library of Congress—has put into this book. He has written a synthesis of the available literature on high-level decision-making about the war, supplemented by numerous interviews with participants in the foreign-policy process, and has traced the roots of the crucial decisions of early 1968 back into the history of United States involve-

NELSON W. POLSBY, *professor of political science at the University of California at Berkeley, is teaching this year at the London School of Economics. His books include* Political Promises *and* Congress and the Presidency.

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ment in Vietnam. Early 1968 was the period that culminated in President Johnson's decision not to seek reelection and that featured a modification of U.S. war aims so significant as to constitute in the eyes of many observers a reversal of U.S. policy toward continuation of the war.

Two versions of the March 1968 turnaround have contended for favor among students of the Johnson Presidency. One, popularized in particular by Townsend Hoopes, assigns principal responsibility for the reversal to Clark Clifford. Clifford assumed his duties as Secretary of Defense early in 1968, more or less at the same time as the celebrated Tet offensive of the Vietcong. Almost at once he was faced with the task of evaluating a very large request from the field for additional American troops. With the assistance of some dedicated young civilians embedded in the Pentagon's "little State Department," Clifford transformed this exercise into a wide-ranging examination of the strategic posture of the U.S. on the Asian mainland, and concluded, contrary to his earlier beliefs, that the war would have to be wound down. He thereupon threw his considerable ingenuity and influence behind the task of converting President Johnson to a similar opinion. Crucial to this process was Clifford's initiative in convening a panel of "wise men," trusted senior American statesmen and long-time confidants of President Johnson's, who had in most cases up until then supported prosecution of the war, and in letting the evidence convince them as well that it was time to cut our losses and move toward withdrawal. When the wise men turned around, goes this story, President Johnson did too, and so, consequently, did U.S. policy.

This version of history has been disputed by Lyndon Johnson, who claimed to have been in the peace camp all along. He could see for himself that, despite the view of his professional military men that the Tet offensive had the chief effect of weakening the enemy, it was not perceived that way in Congress or by public opinion. Feeling the time was ripe for a new diplomatic initiative, he directed Dean Rusk to explore the possibilities of a bombing pause, an action which Rusk in due course recommended and Johnson adopted in conjunction with his own surprise announcement that he would not run for reelection. So, in the Johnson version, it was Rusk and not Clifford who exercised the key role in convincing him to reverse American policy.

Schandler does not exactly choose between these two stories. Clifford, he says,

> was persuaded to accept Rusk's partial bombing halt as a peace initiative . . . because he was convinced that it was as far as the President would go. He was able to see to it that this proposal was phrased in conciliatory language. . . . Clifford launched a deliberate public campaign . . . to interpret the President's actions so as to occupy ground that Johnson had not yet reached. In this way, Clifford made the President's decisions of March 31 a turning point in the direction of the United States effort. . . .

On balance, Schandler says, Clifford has the better of the argument:

> The picture that emerges is of a President dedicated personally and politically to an objective and a course of action, but now challenged not only by the press of events, but by an adviser who had begun to question both the objectives and the course being pursued.

READERS may wonder what all this has to do with the unmaking of a President, since what it appears to explain is the unmaking and remaking of a particular policy, which is not exactly the same thing. In order to bring President Johnson's withdrawal from politics into focus, it is necessary to depart from the detailed consideration of high-level American policy-making about Vietnam and consider a large array of events and circumstances that Schandler addresses only partially and incoherently.

President Johnson's political environment included, among other things, an increasingly restive Democratic party, a very critical Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, a growing "credibility gap" with the

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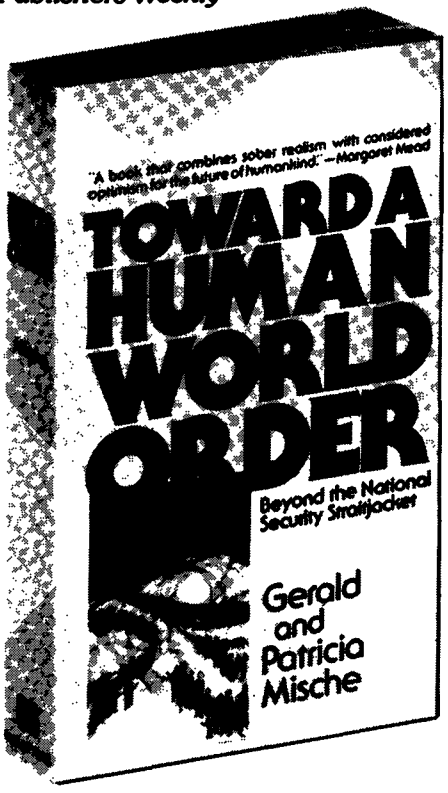
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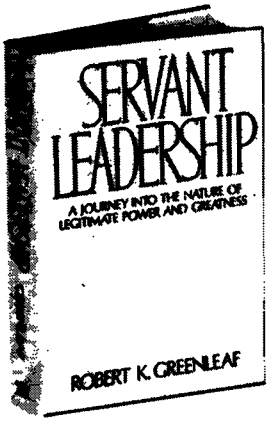

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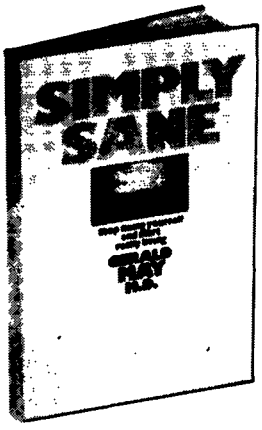

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Washington press corps, very unfavorable television coverage of the war itself, and a Republican party in Congress that smelled blood. Public opinion during the period has been studied in great detail, and a careful analysis of the findings and conclusions of these studies, or an analysis of his own, which Schandler does not attempt, would have put President Johnson's actions in valuable perspective. Instead, public opinion enters into the discussion mostly via the misconceptions of various elite political actors, misconceptions that Schandler does not identify as such.

Thus, although each of these elements of President Johnson's political environment is mentioned, they do not seem to me to have been given their proper weight in reconstructing the decline of President Johnson's effectiveness as a President. The "unmaking" of Presidents—the piecemeal application of the various checks and balances available in the political system as a kind of braking mechanism on Presidents who are perceived to be behaving unsatisfactorily for one reason or another—ought to be a subject of growing intellectual interest, considering what we know in general about recent political events. Although this book makes a contribution to the topic, it really is not about that at all.

Rather, I surmise that the book was mistitled, and that it was closer to Schandler's intention to retell the tale of the March 1968 turnaround, with the added depth that a slight remove in time, interviews with participants, and a careful review of the literature can give. This surmise is given some support by the rather woolly analytic conclusions that Schandler does draw—for example, that U.S. decision-making in guiding the war was too fragmented, and that presidential election campaigns would tend to paralyze Presidents in the event they had to undertake "unpopular" measures (whatever these might be) of self-defense.

But the reader can safely ignore these conclusions, and read *The Unmaking of the President* as a useful reconstruction of elite aspects of an important piece of recent American history.

Recent Judaica

HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER. By GERALD BLIDSTEIN. *Ktav. 234 pp. $15.00.*

MAIMONIDES: TORAH AND PHILOSOPHIC QUEST. By DAVID HARTMAN. *Jewish Publication Society. 296 pp. $7.95.*

THEOLOGY IN THE RESPONSA. By LOUIS JACOBS. *Routledge and Kegan Paul. 378 pp. $18.75.*

TRADITION IN AN AGE OF REFORM. By NOAH ROSENBLOOM. *Jewish Publication Society. 480 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by DAVID SINGER

OVER the past year or so a number of books have been published in the field of Jewish studies which, although primarily scholarly or academic in nature, address themselves to issues of wide intellectual concern, and are of potential interest to a broad readership. The four I have chosen for brief review—all of them deal in various ways with the halakhah (Jewish religious law), as it affects the moral and intellectual life—are among the more notable such contributions to a growing and increasingly impressive literature.

Honor Thy Father and Mother is a carefully nuanced study of the fifth commandment by a scholar who is fully at home in the world of halakhah and who possesses a keen analytic mind and a fine literary sensibility. Working within the framework of the history of ideas, Blidstein deals with such broad matters as the scope of filial responsibility, parental initiative and filial response, and conflict between parents and children. Along the way, he makes fascinating observations about the halakhic treatment of a wide variety of particular issues, including the honor that is due to in-laws, the problem of cruel parents, marriage in the face of parental opposition, and the rela-

DAVID SINGER *writes regularly on matters of Jewish concern in* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals. His previous articles in* COMMENTARY *include "The Yeshivah World" (October 1976) and "Voices of Orthodoxy" (July 1974).*

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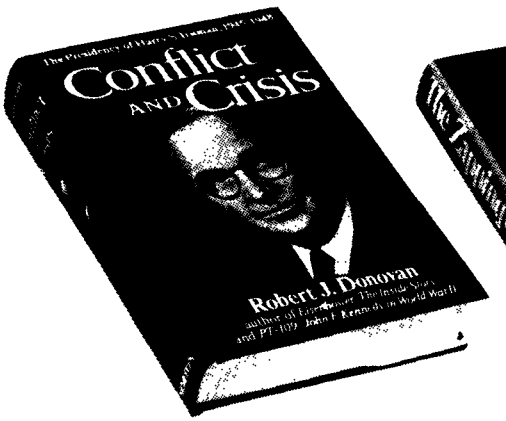
tive claims of parents and teachers upon children.

The central impression that one gains from reading *Honor Thy Father and Mother* is that the fifth commandment constitutes something of a halakhic balancing act. On the one hand, filial responsibility is regarded as a lifelong obligation that grows in scope as parents and children become older. On the other hand, the halakhah seeks to maintain the personal worth of the son or daughter, and discourages parents from making excessive demands of their children. Similarly, while filial piety is viewed as a basic ingredient of social stability—it is, as Blidstein remarks, the "first of the 'social commands,' and indeed the *only* positive demand upon man in society"—the halakhah is chary of setting down hard-and-fast rules in this area, recognizing as it does the "unique quality of each relationship and . . . the limited effectiveness of legislation." It was not for nothing that the Midrash labeled the fifth commandment, "the most difficult of all *mitzvot*."

Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest is a fresh and quite fascinating attempt to solve a long-standing riddle: what is the connection, if any, between the philosophical writings of Maimonides, particularly the *Guide to the Perplexed*, and his massive legal *oeuvre*, particularly the *Mishneh Torah*? Was Maimonides, as the late Leo Strauss argued, a philosophical skeptic who cleverly disguised himself as a pious halakhic Jew? Were there two Maimonideses?

It is Hartman's contention that there is but one Maimonides, and that his work as a whole constitutes a sustained effort to integrate the way of reason and the path of halakhah, the universal and the particular, the contemplative and the active. In a series of closely argued chapters, dealing with such topics as "Philosophy in Maimonides' Legal Works," "Reason and Traditional Authority within Halakhah and Philosophy," "The Philosophic Religious Sensibility," and "Morality and the Passionate Love for God," Hartman fleshes out his thesis that



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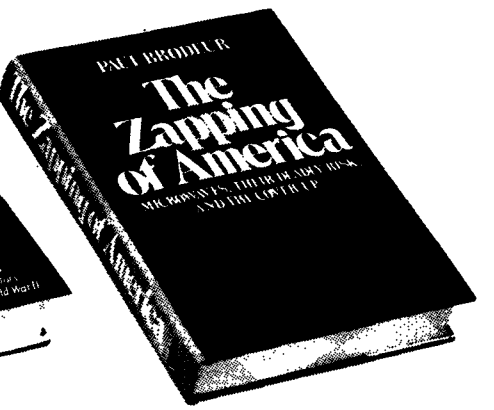

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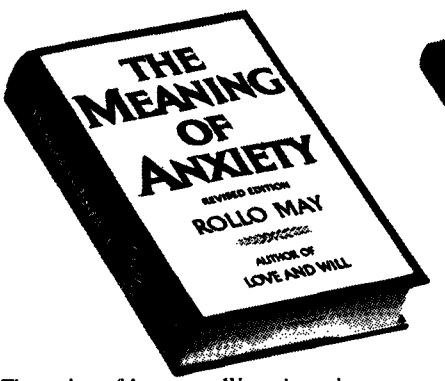

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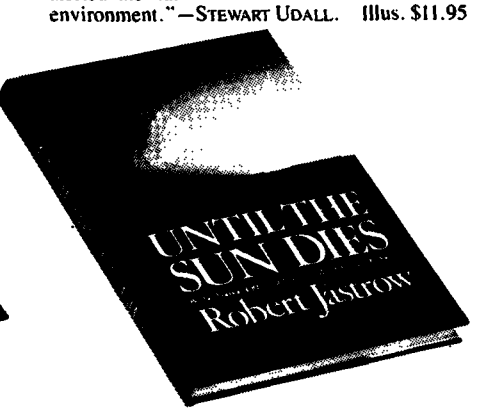

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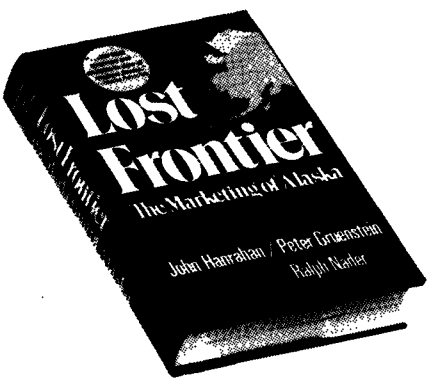

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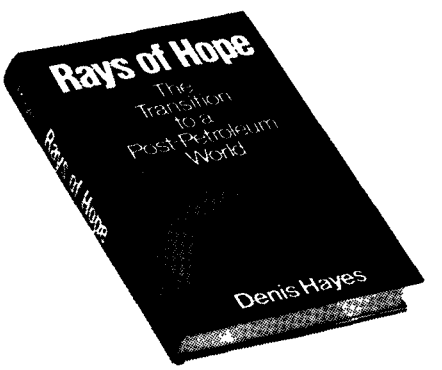

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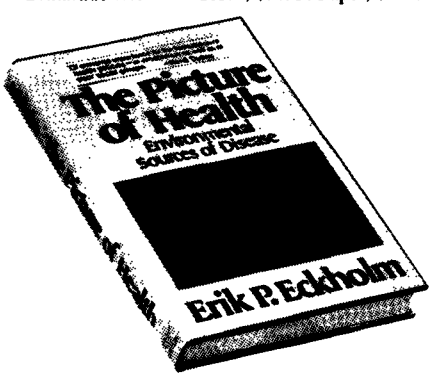

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the greatest Jewish thinker of the Middle Ages "attempt[ed] to show how the free search for truth, established through the study of logic, physics, and metaphysics, [could] live harmoniously with a way of life defined by the normative tradition of Judaism."

While the fine points of Hartman's analysis are open to scholarly debate, the general reader is likely to be drawn especially to the rich sampling of Maimonides' writings that stud Hartman's text, and that establish beyond a shadow of doubt the bold, synthesizing originality of his mind.

RESPONSA, which play a crucial role in the ongoing development and adaptation of the halakhah, are replies by leading rabbinic authorities to questions about religious matters put to them by other scholars. The vast bulk of responsa deal with issues related to practice; in *Theology in the Responsa*, by contrast, Louis Jacobs has gathered together those that focus on points of belief. His aim is to demonstrate that the great halakhists were not only academic lawyers but also metaphysicians vitally concerned with the groundworks of faith. In making his case, Jacobs draws upon material ranging from the 10th to the 20th centuries, from Babylonia to Brooklyn.

As for the kinds of questions that are dealt with in the responsa, these vary from the fundamental to the far out. Does man have freedom of will? Are Christianity and Islam idolatrous religions? Are biblical miracles to be understood literally? Will the halakhah be binding in the messianic age? Are dreams divine communications? Is it permissible to practice magic? Is there such a thing as reincarnation? Can a person sell his share in Paradise?

Unfortunately, *Theology in the Responsa* is limited largely to summary; there is precious little analysis. Rather than organizing his material thematically, Jacobs moves from respondent to respondent in straight chronological fashion. Historical and biographical factors that might have played a role in shaping the theological outlooks of the various rabbinic authorities are hardly touched upon. This is a pity, for Jacobs is an immensely erudite scholar and his topic is a fascinating and important one. As it stands, *Theology in the Responsa* is but the raw material for a first-rate book, not that book itself.

TODAY it may seem obvious that one can be both a fully observant Orthodox Jew and a "modern." A hundred and fifty years ago, such an idea was nothing less than revolutionary. At that time, rigid traditionalists and radical reformers alike shared a common assumption —that a Jew had to choose between being faithful to halakhah and being a child of modernity. It was the German rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-88) who first advocated the harmonious blending of halakhic commitment with secular pursuits. All modern Orthodox Jews are Hirsch's heirs.

Tradition in an Age of Reform is a solid study of Hirsch's religious philosophy. After describing the currents that shaped German Jewish society in the post-Emancipation period, and sketching in the main events of Hirsch's life, Noah Rosenbloom turns to a detailed analysis of Hirsch's ideas as presented in *The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel*, *Horeb*, and the massive *Commentary on the Pentateuch*. Rosenbloom makes it clear that Hirsch sought to be another Maimonides; that he labored to establish a "validating rationale for [traditional Judaism] in terms of the contemporary universe of discourse." Leaning heavily on Hegelian thought, Hirsch polemicized against the Reform movement, and put forward an elaborate defense of the halakhah. His own credo, *Torah im derekh eretz* ("Torah and secular knowledge") was, he insisted, the proper path for those who sought to be *erleuchtet religiös* ("enlightened/religious").

A careful scholar, Rosenbloom sets forth Hirsch's views as "he intended to convey [them] in his

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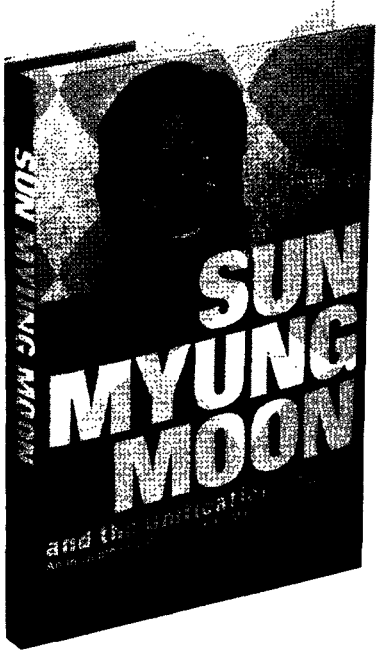

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time." What is missing in *Tradition in an Age of Reform* is any discussion of Hirsch's legacy. Although Rosenbloom, for example, asserts that Hirsch believed in the "unqualified coequality and parity of Torah and *derekh eretz*," Isaac Breuer—Hirsch's grandson and an influential interpreter of the master's teachings—denied this, insisting that Hirsch regarded secular pursuits as distinctly secondary. An examination of Hirsch's legacy as it has come down to us would reveal a great deal about the ongoing tensions involved in being both Orthodox and modern.

Early Fascist

THE FIRST DUCE: D'ANNUNZIO AT FIUME. By MICHAEL A. LEDEEN. *Johns Hopkins University Press. 225 pp. $13.50.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH SHATTAN

THE period in European history between the two world wars has often been called the fascist epoch, yet even today the nature of fascism remains problematic. To those who take their political bearings from Moscow, fascism is "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital." But the problem with this definition is that European "reactionaries" were in fact *anti*-fascist. Franco suppressed his fascist party, the Falange, because he thought it was too revolutionary, and Salazar, Horthy, and Antonescu were equally hostile to their fascist parties. These "reactionaries" regarded the exercise of power as the exclusive prerogative of the traditional ruling classes, and they feared and hated fascism because, like socialism and Communism, it sought to mobilize the heretofore passive masses and seize power in their name.

Fascism's reliance on the masses was not its only revolutionary characteristic. Equally revolutionary was its attempt to remake society and foster the emergence of a "new man." As the historian George Mosse put it recently in an interview, European fascism constituted a revolution of the Right, "a revolution which wanted a new man, which looked for vitality, for action, but at the same time for the restoration of a system of traditional, middle-class morality. . . ."

The traditional association of fascism with the radical Right has recently been questioned by Renzo De Felice, one of Italy's most respected historians and a leading scholar of Italian fascism. In contrast to Mosse and others, De Felice locates the origins of the Italian fascist movement on the Left—more specifically, within a tradition of "totalitarian democracy" stemming from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution—and in this regard he draws a sharp distinction between fascism and Nazism. In a lengthy interview which, when released as a paperback in 1975, rapidly became a bestseller in Italy and provoked a storm of opposition, De Felice argued that "Nazism sought a restoration of old values and not the creation of new values." The Nazis rejected the ethos of the modern era in its entirety and tried to liberate "Aryan man" from the restraints of modernity, whereas the Italian fascist movement, in De Felice's view, set out to create the "new man" which the modern age demanded, and in this lay its connection with the Left.

Both the interview with De Felice and the interview with George Mosse from which I have been quoting were conducted by Michael Ledeen, a young historian who has lived in Italy and who has himself written extensively on European politics and especially fascism. His important new study of Gabriele D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume in the autumn of 1919 strongly suggests that De Felice's stress on the Rousseauian, revolutionary-democratic origins of fascism is not misplaced.

The various intrigues leading up to D'Annunzio's coup are reconstructed by Ledeen with painstaking detail, but the outline of the story is easily told. After World

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JOSEPH SHATTAN *writes frequently in* COMMENTARY *and elsewhere on European history and Middle Eastern affairs.*

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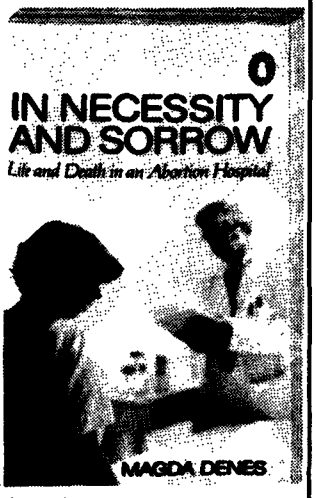

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War I, the government of the city of Fiume, which had long enjoyed a measure of autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian empire, declared its desire to be annexed by Italy. This move was opposed by President Woodrow Wilson, who felt that, with the exception of Trieste, the entire Adriatic coast ought to become part of the new state of Yugoslavia. As diplomats sought to resolve this problem—and a host of others—at Versailles, Gabriele D'Annunzio, acting without the consent of the Italian government, entered the disputed city at the head of a massive column of Italian war veterans and was subsequently installed as *commandante*.

To D'Annunzio's conservative nationalist supporters, the occupation of Fiume was a limited operation whose sole purpose was to force a timid Italian government to annex the city. D'Annunzio, however, saw matters in more grandiose terms: to him, the occupation of Fiume was merely the first stage of a gigantic political enterprise which would bring about the rejuvenation of Italy and which would culminate in a radically new global political order. A poet and a war hero, the charismatic D'Annunzio sought to place himself at the head of a revolt of the young and the virile, a revolt which proposed nothing less than the transformation of human nature itself. As the revolutionary implications of D'Annunzio's vision became apparent to his conservative supporters (and, indeed, to D'Annunzio himself), their relations with the *commandante* grew strained. Radical European leftists, on the other hand, came to view the Fiuman experiment with increasing sympathy.

D'Annunzio is rightly regarded as the John the Baptist of the Italian fascist movement. Indeed, but for him, the fascist seizure of power would probably not have occurred. It was through Mussolini's open support of D'Annunzio's coup that his movement first began to attract a wide following, and when the Fiuman adventure ended in defeat for D'Annunzio, many of his followers joined Mussolini's movement. Thus, the occupation of Fiume is a crucial event in the history of Italian fascism.

Two of D'Annunzio's undertakings, in particular, testify to the consonance of his principles with the principles of the radical European Left: the League of Fiume and the Constitution of Fiume (*la Carta del Carno*). The League of Fiume was conceived of as an "anti-League of Nations," a revolutionary, anti-imperialist body that would organize the oppressed peoples and nations of the world —the Irish, Hungarians, Indians, Austrians, and Egyptians—against the Versailles powers. The *Carta del Carno*, drafted by D'Annunzio in collaboration with Alceste De Ambris, a leading Italian anarcho-syndicalist, sought to produce the new, unalienated man that D'Annunzio ceaselessly called for. It provided, Ledeen writes,

> for the complete equality of women, total toleration of religion and atheism and a thoroughgoing system of social security, medical insurance, and old-age care, in addition to a method of direct democracy. Furthermore, it provided for a constant change in political leadership in order both to protect against an entrenched bureaucracy and to guarantee a constant infusion of new elements into the government of the city. These specifically political elements were combined with an elaborate system of mass celebrations and rituals designed to guarantee a high level of political consciousness and enthusiasm among all the citizens of the state. Culture was combined with politics and art in a unique synthesis, and one critic has called the *Carta del Carno* a kind of Napoleonic code rewritten by an Ezra Pound.

In his classic study, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, the Israeli historian Jacob Talmon noted that for the revolutionary democrats of the 18th century, "The task of the Legislator is to create a new kind of man, with a new mentality, new values, a new type of sensitiveness, free from old instincts, prejudices, and bad habits. It is not enough to change the machinery of government, or even reshuffle the classes. You have to change human nature . . . to make man virtuous." Talmon was concerned primarily with the political philosophy of Rousseau, but as Ledeen's study

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demonstrates, his words apply equally well as a description of D'Annunzio's enterprise at Fiume. If it has generally been assumed in contemporary political thinking that the Jacobin and fascist traditions are antithetical, the work of Jacob Talmon, Renzo De Felice, and Michael Ledeen may yet force a revision of some of our most deeply ingrained political definitions.

Sacco and Vanzetti

THE NEVER-ENDING WRONG. By KATHERINE ANNE PORTER. *Atlantic-Little, Brown. 63 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by ROGER STARR

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER has couched her reminiscences of the last days of Sacco and Vanzetti in a tone more nostalgic than elegiac. The nostalgia arises from her recognition that the Sacco-Vanzetti episode marked a turn in her own development as a writer, a milestone at the point where the hazy landscape of youth fades from view.

This milestone was not merely personal; the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti was taken up by large numbers of educated Americans. In the course of the six years between their arrest on suspicion of murder and their execution in 1927, several threads of American experience came to be knit together.

To begin with, the case of Sacco and Vanzetti was tinged with mystery. Even when most of the educated world believed in their innocence as much as it believed the earth a globe, there remained the question of who, if not they, committed the robbery and murder for which they were being tried. Since (as several students of the case have argued in recent years) Sacco may actually have held and used the murder weapon, the mystery is even deeper. And if the "unthinkable" should turn out to have been true of Sacco, could he have let Vanzetti die innocent? What, in fact, were the relations between the two men whose names are now as legendary and as closely linked as Damon and Pythias? If Sacco's gun did not in fact fire the fatal bullet, who tampered with it? When? The questions multiply even if they never erase the implacable fact that the two men were put to death on findings of guilt which satisfied almost no educated American under fifty.

Another thread in the case was the immigrant experience. It posed a question still not entirely resolved: can America, thanks to its lack of a hereditary landed aristocracy and of an established church, and its representative government based on universal suffrage, escape the class warfare of Europe? The arrival of large numbers of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe at the turn of the century put this question to the fire as it had not been since the Civil War. The National Origins Immigration Act of 1921 answered it in the negative: American exceptionalism could continue only if immigration were controlled. The ethnic difficulties of that period are now forgotten in the chic myth that everyone in America has made it but blacks.

For many young Americans, Sacco and Vanzetti raised this particular problem to consciousness for the first time. The novelist John Dos Passos, whose presence in Boston during the last days is meticulously recorded by Miss Porter in her memoirs, made the case a turning point in *The Big Money*. In one of his "Camera's Eye" passages, Dos Passos neatly captures the immigrant aspect of the Sacco-Vanzetti trial:

> Accustomed the smoking car accustomed the jumble of faces rumble cozily homelike toward Boston through the gathering dark how can I make them feel how our fathers our uncles haters of oppression came to this coast how say Don't let them scare you make them feel who are your oppressors America or that this fishpeddler you have in Charlestown Jail is one of your founders Massachusetts?

ROGER STARR *is the author of* America's Housing Challenge *and other works and is a member of the New York* Times *Editorial Board.*

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A third major thread in the Sacco Vanzetti episode was the exploitation of the trial by American Communists, whose interest in the perfections or imperfections of American institutions was minimal, and whose human sympathies for the two accused anarchists were, if anything, less than minimal. Miss Porter, who was thirty-seven at the time, had already seen at first hand enough of the Mexican revolution and the role played in it by Communist revolutionaries to understand the way in which they, for their own doctrinal and political purposes, were now trying to exploit Sacco and Vanzetti.

THIS issue—the infiltration by Communists into the independent Left, and into the American battle for civil liberties—has not disappeared over the years since the trial. It is now public knowledge, for instance, that the American Civil Liberties Union, in the 1950's, sought the help of the FBI to ascertain which prospective candidates for its Board of Directors were, privately, Communists. Although such caution may seem quaint today to those to whom it does not seem hideously reactionary, the ACLU was by no means unrealistic in wanting to know the basic philosophy of those who demanded to participate in its leadership. All too often, the dedicated friends of democratic liberties changed their dedication with turns in Soviet foreign policy.

Miss Porter happens (so it seems) to have fallen into the hands of a Communist-led faction of the Sacco-Vanzetti protest movement. She attributes a statement to the leader of this faction, to the effect that the Communists had less interest in Sacco and Vanzetti alive than in Sacco and Vanzetti dead. This statement has been quoted by some reviewers of *The Never-Ending Wrong*, but others have seemed reluctant to discuss the role of the Communists in the Sacco-Vanzetti affair. John Leonard, for instance, writing in the New York *Times*, pointed out that numerically the Communists were a small part of the general chaos. Actually, they were no part of the *chaos* at all, for they knew exactly what they were doing. If help were needed to make an execution practically inevitable, whatever its justice or merits, they were ready to provide it, just as they were ready to exploit the political advantages (to Russia) of America's supposed iniquity. For Leonard, the presence of the Communists did not significantly affect the outcome, and he implies that Miss Porter would have done better not to mention it. But the Communist participation was in fact central to Miss Porter's understanding of the events and to the understanding of many others as well, for whom it left a sense of having been somehow betrayed in the midst of an episode in which they themselves were most deeply involved.

A fourth major element in the Sacco-Vanzetti episode, amply treated by Miss Porter, is the periodic emergence in America of a wave of social protest led by members of the ruling class, or what would elsewhere be called the ruling class. Whether it is the 19th-century anti-slavery movement, or the civil-rights or anti-war movement of our own day, all such movements have about them a particular American quality of innocence, with the participants taking for granted that nothing very serious will happen to *them* as a consequence of their actions. And even if some do pay a penalty, and occasionally a very high one, the upper-income participants are seldom among them.

This was certainly true in Boston, even though, as Miss Porter records, the protesters raised their own consciousness with scary stories. She writes: "There was then in existence—is it still I wonder?—an infamous law called the Baumes Law, which provided that anyone who had been arrested as much as four times—or was it *more* than four times?—should be eligible to imprisonment for life." She adds a little later that "some of us couldn't believe such a monstrosity existed on our statute books; we thought someone was playing a low joke on our ignorance." In fact, after having been arrested for picketing, the protesters were fined $5 each for loitering—no matter how many times arrested—and urged to leave.

It would seem that a group of intellectuals protesting a legal miscarriage would be sufficiently interested in the statutes to learn that the Baumes Law, a New York State statute wholly irrelevant in Massachusetts, provided that anyone *convicted*, not "arrested," of four unconnected *felonies*, not misdemeanors or "offenses," could be sentenced to life after the fourth conviction as an habitual offender. The law had nothing to do with Boston in 1927. But it was essential to Miss Porter to believe this nonsense because it helped her, and presumably others, to narrow the gap between themselves and the two victims of a social disaster for which they held their parents or their own class responsible.

How long, one wonders, will the children of America's ruling class undergo this periodic drive to express their solidarity with those at the opposite pole of society, only to drop the cause in question when it becomes inconvenient or boring and pick up again the burdens of leadership? (How different was the response, by contrast, of similarly situated French youth to the Dreyfus case.) This curious process, like the turning over of the waters in a lake under the heat of the summer sun, was a mystery to Sacco. Miss Porter notes that neither he nor Vanzetti really trusted "these strangers from the upper world who furnished the judges and lawyers to the courts, the politicians to the offices, the faculties to the universities." Sacco wrote to a "rich and ardent" benefactor. "Although we are one heart, unfortunately we represent two opposite classes." Only in America.

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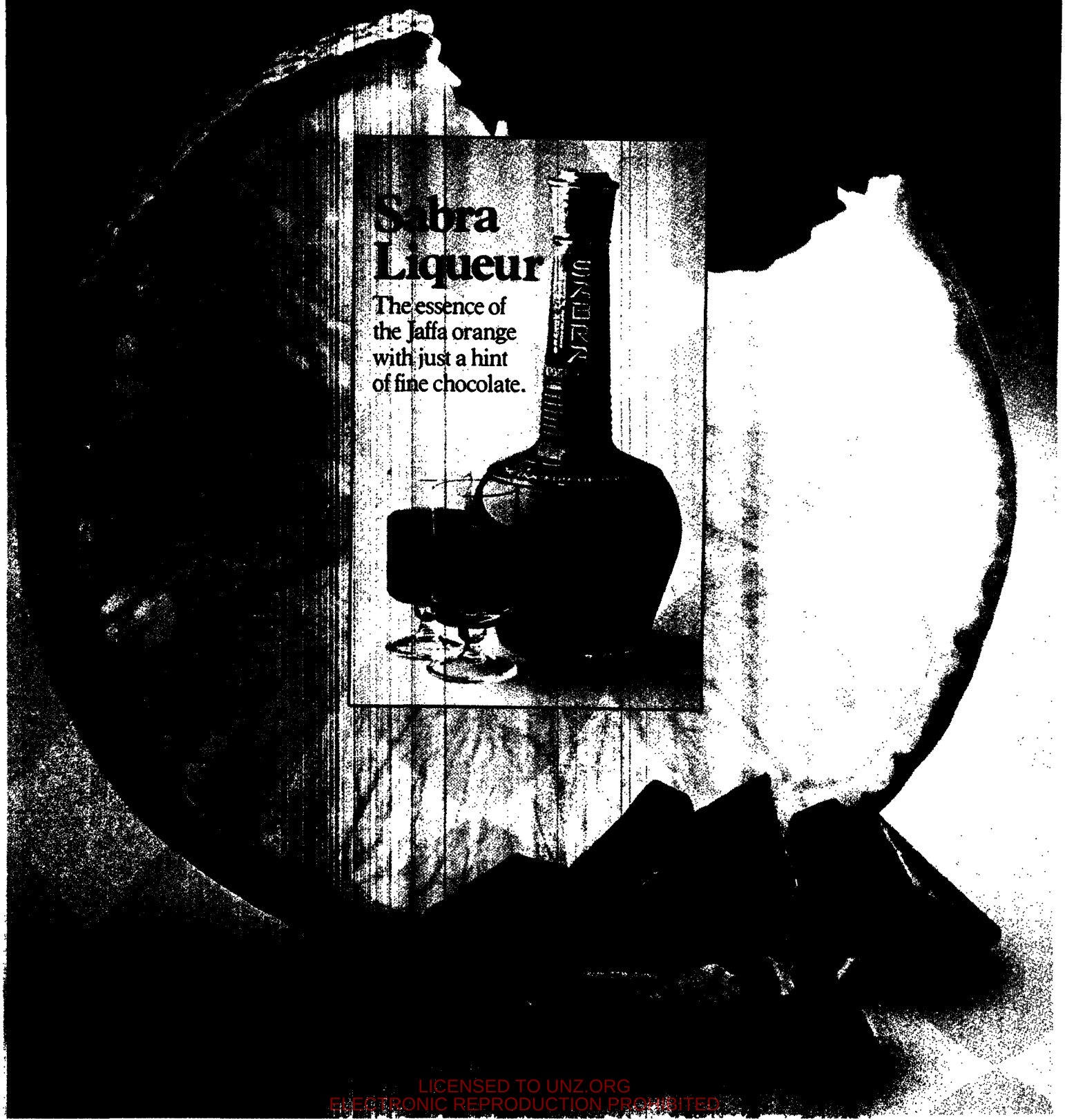

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